

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

N<sup>o</sup>. 64.]

SATURDAY, JULY 14, 1860.

[PRICE 5 CTS.

## THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

PART THE SECOND. HARTRIGHT'S NARRATIVE.  
IX.

ONCE out of sight of the church, I pressed forward briskly on my way to Knowlesbury.

The road was, for the most part, straight and level. Whenever I looked back over it, I saw the two spies, steadily following me. For the greater part of the way, they kept at a safe distance behind. But, once or twice, they quickened their pace, as if with the purpose of overtaking me—then stopped—consulted together—and fell back again to their former position. They had some special object evidently in view; and they seemed to be hesitating, or differing about the best means of accomplishing it. I could not guess exactly what their design might be; but I felt serious doubts of reaching Knowlesbury without some mischance on the way.

I had just entered on a lonely part of the road, with a sharp turn at some distance ahead, and had concluded (calculating by time) that I must now be getting near to the town, when I suddenly heard the steps of the men close behind me.

Before I could look round, one of them (the man by whom I had been followed in London) passed rapidly on my left side, and hustled me with his shoulder. I had been more irritated by the manner in which he and his companion had dogged my steps all the way from Old Welmingham than I was myself aware of; and I unfortunately pushed the fellow away smartly with my open hand. He instantly shouted for help. His companion, the tall man in the gamekeeper's clothes, sprang to my right side—and the next moment the two scoundrels held me pinioned between them in the middle of the road.

The conviction that a trap had been laid for me, and the vexation of knowing that I had fallen into it, fortunately restrained me from making my position still worse by an unavailing struggle with two men—one of whom would in all probability have been more than a match for me, single handed. I repressed the first natural movement by which I had attempted to shake them off, and looked about to see if there was any person near to whom I could appeal.

A labourer was at work in an adjoining field, who must have witnessed all that had passed.

I called to him to follow us to the town. He shook his head with stolid obstinacy, and walked away, in the direction of a cottage which stood back from the high road. At the same time the men who held me between them declared their intention of charging me with an assault. I was cool enough and wise enough, now, to make no opposition. "Drop your hold of my arms," I said, "and I will go with you to the town." The man in the gamekeeper's dress roughly refused. But the shorter man was sharp enough to look to consequences, and not to let his companion commit himself by unnecessary violence. He made a sign to the other, and I walked on between them, with my arms free.

We reached the turning in the road; and there, close before us, were the suburbs of Knowlesbury. One of the local policemen was walking along the path by the roadside. The men at once appealed to him. He replied that the magistrate was then sitting at the town-hall; and recommended that we should appear before him immediately.

We went on to the town-hall. The clerk made out a formal summons; and the charge was preferred against me, with the customary exaggeration and the customary perversion of the truth, on such occasions. The magistrate (an ill-tempered man, with a sour enjoyment in the exercise of his own power) inquired if any one on, or near, the road had witnessed the assault; and, greatly to my surprise, the complainant admitted the presence of the labourer in the field. I was enlightened, however, as to the object of the admission, by the magistrate's next words. He remanded me, at once, for the production of the witness; expressing, at the same time, his willingness to take bail for my reappearance, if I could produce one responsible surety to offer it. If I had been known in the town, he would have liberated me on my own recognisances; but, as I was a total stranger, it was necessary that I should find responsible bail.

The whole object of the stratagem was now disclosed to me. It had been so managed as to make a remand necessary in a town where I was a perfect stranger, and where I could not hope to get my liberty on bail. The remand merely extended over three days, until the next sitting of the magistrate. But, in that time, while I was in confinement, Sir Percival might use any means he pleased to embarrass my future proceedings—perhaps to screen himself from detec-

tion altogether—without the slightest fear of any hindrance on my part. At the end of the three days, the charge would, no doubt, be withdrawn; and the attendance of the witness would be perfectly useless.

My indignation, I may almost say, my despair, at this mischievous check to all further progress—so base and trifling in itself, and yet so disheartening and so serious in its probable results—quite unfitted me, at first, to reflect on the best means of extricating myself from the dilemma in which I now stood. I had the folly to call for writing materials, and to think of privately communicating my real position to the magistrate. The hopelessness and the imprudence of this proceeding failed to strike me before I had actually written the opening lines of the letter. It was not till I had pushed the paper away—not till, I am ashamed to say, I had almost allowed the vexation of my helpless position to conquer me—that a course of action suddenly occurred to my mind, which Sir Percival had probably not anticipated, and which might set me free again in a few hours. I determined to communicate my situation to Mr. Dawson, of Oak Lodge.

I had visited this gentleman's house, it may be remembered, at the time of my first inquiries in the Blackwater Park neighbourhood; and I had presented to him a letter of introduction from Miss Halcombe, in which she recommended me to his friendly attention in the strongest terms. I now wrote, referring to this letter, and to what I had previously told Mr. Dawson of the delicate and dangerous nature of my inquiries. I had not revealed to him the truth about Laura; having merely described my errand as being of the utmost importance to private family interests with which Miss Halcombe was concerned. Using the same caution still, I now accounted for my presence at Knowlesbury in the same manner—and I put it to the doctor to say whether the trust reposed in me by a lady whom he well knew, and the hospitality I had myself received in his house, justified me or not in asking him to come to my assistance in a place where I was quite friendless.

I obtained permission to hire a messenger to drive away at once with my letter, in a conveyance which might be used to bring the doctor back immediately. Oak Lodge was on the Knowlesbury side of Blackwater. The man declared he could drive there in forty minutes, and could bring Mr. Dawson back in forty more. I directed him to follow the doctor wherever he might happen to be, if he was not at home—and then sat down to wait for the result with all the patience and all the hope that I could summon to help me.

It was not quite half-past one when the messenger departed. Before half-past three, he returned, and brought the doctor with him. Mr. Dawson's kindness, and the delicacy with which he treated his prompt assistance quite as a matter of course, almost overpowered me. Bail was offered, and accepted immediately. Before four o'clock, on that afternoon, I was shaking hands

warmly with the good old doctor—a free man again—in the streets of Knowlesbury.

Mr. Dawson hospitably invited me to go back with him to Oak Lodge, and take up my quarters there for the night. I could only reply that my time was not my own; I could only ask him to let me pay my visit in a few days, when I might repeat my thanks, and offer to him all the explanations which I felt to be only his due, but which I was not then in a position to make. We parted with friendly assurances on both sides; and I turned my steps at once to Mr. Wansborough's office in the High-street.

Time was now of the last importance. The news of my being free on bail would reach Sir Percival, to an absolute certainty, before night. If the next few hours did not put me in a position to justify his worst fears, and to hold him helpless at my mercy, I might lose every inch of the ground I had gained, never to recover it again. The unscrupulous nature of the man, the local influence he possessed, the desperate peril of exposure with which my blindfold inquiries threatened him—all warned me to press on to positive discovery, without the useless waste of a single minute. I had found time to think, while I was waiting for Mr. Dawson's arrival; and I had well employed it. Certain portions of the conversation of the talkative old clerk, which had wearied me at the time, now recurred to my memory with a new significance; and a suspicion crossed my mind darkly, which had not occurred to me while I was in the vestry. On my way to Knowlesbury, I had only proposed to apply to Mr. Wansborough for information on the subject of Sir Percival's mother. My object, now, was to examine the duplicate register of Old Welmingham Church.

Mr. Wansborough was in his office when I inquired for him.

He was a jovial, red-faced, easy-looking man—more like a country squire than a lawyer—and he seemed to be both surprised and amused by my application. He had heard of his father's copy of the register; but had not even seen it himself. It had never been inquired after—and it was no doubt in the strong-room, among other old papers that had not been disturbed since his father's death. It was a pity (Mr. Wansborough said) that the old gentleman was not alive to hear his precious copy asked for at last. He would have ridden his favourite hobby harder than ever, now. How had I come to hear of the copy? was it through anybody in the town?

I parried the question as well as I could. It was impossible at this stage of the investigation to be too cautious; and it was just as well not to let Mr. Wansborough know prematurely that I had already examined the original register. I described myself, therefore, as pursuing a family inquiry, to the object of which every possible saving of time was of great importance. I was anxious to send certain particulars to London by that day's post; and one look at the duplicate register (paying, of course, the necessary fees) might supply what I required, and save me a further journey to Old Welmingham. I added

that, in the event of my subsequently requiring a copy of the original register, I should make application to Mr. Wansborough's office to furnish me with the document.

After this explanation, no objection was made to producing the copy. A clerk was sent to the strong-room, and, after some delay, returned with the volume. It was of exactly the same size as the volume in the vestry; the only difference being that the copy was more smartly bound. I took it with me to an unoccupied desk. My hands trembled—my head was burning hot—I felt the necessity of concealing my agitation from the persons about me in the room, before I ventured to open the book.

On the blank page at the beginning, to which I first turned, were traced some lines, in faded ink. They contained these words:

"Copy of the Marriage Register of Welmingham Parish Church. Executed under my orders; and afterwards compared, entry by entry, with the original, by myself. (Signed) Robert Wansborough, vestry-clerk." Below this note, there was a line added, in another handwriting, as follows: "Extending from the first of January, 1800, to the thirtieth of June, 1815."

I turned to the month of September, eighteen hundred and three. I found the marriage of the man whose Christian name was the same as my own. I found the double register of the marriages of the two brothers. And between these entries at the bottom of the page—?

Nothing! Not a vestige of the entry which recorded the marriage of Sir Felix Glyde and Cecilia Jane Elster, in the register of the church!

My heart gave a great bound, and throbbed as if it would stifle me. I looked again—I was afraid to believe the evidence of my own eyes. No! not a doubt. The marriage was not there. The entries on the copy occupied exactly the same places on the page as the entries in the original. The last entry on one page recorded the marriage of the man with my Christian name. Below it, there was a blank space—a space evidently left because it was too narrow to contain the entry of the marriages of the two brothers, which in the copy, as in the original, occupied the top of the next page. That space told the whole story! There it must have remained, in the church register, from eighteen hundred and three (when the marriages had been solemnised and the copy had been made) to eighteen hundred and twenty-seven, when Sir Percival appeared at Old Welmingham. Here, at Knowlesbury, was the chance of committing the forgery, shown to me in the copy—and there, at Old Welmingham, was the forgery committed, in the register of the church!

My head turned giddy; I held by the desk to keep myself from falling. Of all the suspicions which had struck me, in relation to that desperate man, not one had been near the truth. The idea that he was not Sir Percival Glyde at all, that he had no more claim to the baronetcy and to Blackwater Park than the poorest

labourer who worked on the estate, had never once occurred to my mind. At one time, I had thought he might be Anne Catherick's father; at another time, I had thought he might have been Anne Catherick's husband—the offence of which he was really guilty had been, from first to last, beyond the widest reach of my imagination. The paltry means by which the fraud had been effected, the magnitude and daring of the crime that it represented, the horror of the consequences involved in its discovery, overwhelmed me. Who could wonder, now, at the brute-restlessness of the wretch's life; at his desperate alternations between abject duplicity and reckless violence; at the madness of guilty distrust which had made him imprison Anne Catherick in the Asylum, and had given him over to the vile conspiracy against his wife, on the bare suspicion that the one and the other knew his terrible secret? The disclosure of that secret might, in past years, have hanged him—might now transport him for life. The disclosure of that secret, even if the sufferers by his deception spared him the penalties of the law, would deprive him, at one blow, of the name, the rank, the estate, the whole social existence that he had usurped. This was the Secret, and it was mine! A word from me; and house, lands, baronetcy, were gone from him for ever—a word from me, and he was driven out into the world a nameless, penniless, friendless outcast! The man's whole future hung on my lips—and he knew it, by this time, as certainly as I did!

That last thought steadied me. Interests far more precious than my own depended on the caution which must now guide my slightest actions. There was no possible treachery which Sir Percival might not attempt against me. In the danger and desperation of his position, he would be staggered by no risks, he would recoil at no crime—he would, literally, hesitate at nothing to save himself.

I considered for a minute. My first necessity was to secure positive evidence, in writing, of the discovery that I had just made, and, in the event of any personal misadventure happening to me, to place that evidence beyond Sir Percival's reach. The copy of the register was sure to be safe in Mr. Wansborough's strong-room. But the position of the original, in the vestry, was, as I had seen, anything but secure.

In this emergency, I resolved to return to the church, to apply again to the clerk, and to take the necessary extract from the register, before I slept that night. I was not then aware that a legally-certified copy was necessary, and that no document merely drawn out by myself could claim the proper importance, as a proof. I was not aware of this; and my determination to keep my present proceedings a secret, prevented me from asking any questions which might have procured the necessary information. My one anxiety was the anxiety to get back to Old Welmingham. I made the best excuses I could for the discomposure in my face and manner, which Mr. Wansborough had already noticed; laid the necessary

fee on his table; arranged that I should write to him, in a day or two; and left the office, with my head in a whirl, and my blood throbbing through my veins at fever heat.

It was just getting dark. The idea occurred to me that I might be followed again, and attacked on the high road.

My walking-stick was a light one, of little or no use for purposes of defence. I stopped, before leaving Knowlesbury, and bought a stout country cudgel, short, and heavy at the head. With this homely weapon, if any one man tried to stop me, I was a match for him. If more than one attacked me, I could trust to my heels. In my school-days, I had been a noted runner—and I had not wanted for practice since, in the later time of my experience in Central America.

I started from the town at a brisk pace, and kept the middle of the road. A small misty rain was falling; and it was impossible, for the first half of the way, to make sure whether I was followed or not. But at the last half of my journey, when I supposed myself to be about two miles from the church, I saw a man run by me in the rain—and then heard the gate of a field by the roadside shut to, sharply. I kept straight on, with my cudgel ready in my hand, my ears on the alert, and my eyes straining to see through the mist and the darkness. Before I had advanced a hundred yards, there was a rustling in the hedge on my right hand, and three men sprang out into the road.

I instantly drew aside to the footpath. The two foremost men were carried beyond me, before they could check themselves. The third was as quick as lightning. He stopped—half turned—and struck at me with his stick. The blow was aimed at hazard, and was not a severe one. It fell on my left shoulder. I returned it heavily on his head. He staggered back, and jostled his two companions, just as they were both rushing at me. This gave me a moment's start. I slipped past them, and took to the middle of the road again, at the top of my speed.

The two unhurt men pursued me. They were both good runners; the road was smooth and level; and, for the first five minutes or more, I was conscious that I did not gain on them. It was perilous work to run for long in the darkness. I could barely see the dim black line of the hedges on either side; and any chance obstacle in the road would have thrown me down to a certainty. Ere long, I felt the ground changing; it descended from the level, at a turn, and then rose again beyond. Down-hill, the men rather gained on me; but, up-hill, I began to distance them. The rapid, regular thump of their feet grew fainter on my ear; and I calculated by the sound that I was far enough in advance to take to the fields, with a good chance of their passing me in the darkness. Diverging to the footpath, I made for the first break that I could guess at, rather than see, in the hedge. It proved to be a closed gate. I vaulted over, and finding myself in a field, kept across it steadily, with my back to the road. I heard the men pass

the gate, still running—then, in a minute more, heard one of them call to the other to come back. It was no matter what they did, now; I was out of their sight and out of their hearing. I kept straight across the field, and, when I had reached the further extremity of it, waited there for a minute to recover my breath.

It was impossible to venture back to the road; but I was determined, nevertheless, to get to Old Welmingham that evening.

Neither moon nor stars appeared to guide me. I only knew that I had kept the wind and rain at my back on leaving Knowlesbury—and if I now kept them at my back still, I might at least be certain of not advancing altogether in the wrong direction. Proceeding on this plan, I crossed the country—meeting with no worse obstacles than hedges, ditches, and thickets, which every now and then obliged me to alter my course for a little while—until I found myself on a hill-side, with the ground sloping away steeply before me. I descended to the bottom of the hollow, squeezed my way through a hedge, and got out into a lane. Having turned to the right on leaving the road, I now turned to the left, on the chance of returning to the line from which I had wandered. After following the muddy windings of the lane for ten minutes or more, I saw a cottage with a light in one of the windows. The garden gate was open to the lane; and I went in at once to inquire my way.

Before I could knock at the door, it was suddenly opened, and a man came running out with a lighted lantern in his hand. He stopped and held it up at the sight of me. We both started as we saw each other. My wanderings had led me round the outskirts of the village, and had brought me out at the lower end of it. I was back at Old Welmingham; and the man with the lantern was no other than my acquaintance of the morning, the parish clerk.

His manner appeared to have altered strangely, in the interval since I had last seen him. He looked suspicious and confused; his ruddy cheeks were deeply flushed; and his first words, when he spoke, were quite unintelligible to me.

"Where are the keys?" he said. "Have you taken them?"

"What keys?" I asked. "I have only this moment come from Knowlesbury. What keys do you mean?"

"The keys of the vestry. Lord save us and help us! what shall I do? The keys are gone! Do you hear?" The old man shook the lantern at me in his agitation. "The keys are gone!"

"How? When? Who can have taken them?"

"I don't know," said the clerk, staring about him wildly in the darkness. "I've only just got back. I told you I had a long day's work this morning—I locked the door, and shut the window down—it's open now, the window's open. Look! somebody has got in there, and taken the keys."

He turned to the casement-window to show me that it was wide open. The door of the lantern came loose from its fastening as he swayed it round; and the wind blew the candle out.



"Get another light," I said; "and let us both go to the vestry together. Quick! quick!"

I hurried him into the house. The treachery that I had every reason to expect, the treachery that might deprive me of every advantage I had gained, was, at that moment, perhaps, in process of accomplishment. My impatience to reach the church was so great, that I could not remain inactive in the cottage while the clerk lit the lantern again. I walked out, down the garden path, into the lane.

Before I had advanced ten paces, a man approached me from the direction leading to the church. He spoke respectfully as we met. I could not see his face; but, judging by his voice only, he was a perfect stranger to me.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Percival——" he began.

I stopped him before he could say more.

"The darkness misleads you," I said. "I am not Sir Percival."

The man drew back directly.

"I thought it was my master," he muttered, in a confused, doubtful way.

"You expected to meet your master here?"

"I was told to wait in the lane."

With that answer, he retraced his steps. I looked back at the cottage, and saw the clerk coming out, with the lantern lighted once more. I took the old man's arm to help him on the more quickly. We hastened along the lane, and passed the person who had accosted me. As well as I could see by the light of the lantern, he was a servant out of livery.

"Who's that?" whispered the clerk. "Does he know anything about the keys?"

"We won't wait to ask him," I replied. "We will go on to the vestry first."

The church was not visible, even by daytime, until the end of the lane was reached. As we mounted the rising ground which led to the building from that point, one of the village children—a boy—came up to us, attracted by the light we carried, and recognised the clerk.

"I say, measter," said the boy, pulling officiously at the clerk's coat, "there be summun up yander in the church. I heerd un lock the door on hisself—I heerd un strike a loight wi' a match."

The clerk trembled, and leaned against me heavily.

"Come! come!" I said, encouragingly. "We are not too late. We will catch the man, whoever he is. Keep the lantern, and follow me as fast as you can."

I mounted the hill rapidly. The dark mass of the church-tower was the first object I discerned dimly against the night sky. As I turned aside to get round to the vestry, I heard heavy footsteps close to me. The servant had ascended to the church after us. "I don't mean any harm," he said, when I turned round on him; "I'm only looking for my master." His tones betrayed unmistakable fear. I took no notice of him, and went on.

The instant I turned the corner, and came in view of the vestry, I saw the lantern-skylight

on the roof brilliantly lit up from within. It shone out with dazzling brightness against the murky, starless sky.

I hurried through the churchyard to the door.

As I got near, there was a strange smell stealing out on the damp night air. I heard a snapping noise inside—I saw the light above grow brighter and brighter—a pane of the glass cracked—I ran to the door, and put my hand on it. The vestry was on fire!

Before I could move, before I could draw my breath, I was horror-struck by a heavy thump against the door, from the inside. I heard the key worked violently in the lock—I heard a man's voice, behind the door, raised to a dreadful shrillness, screaming for help.

The servant, who had followed me, staggered back shuddering, and dropped to his knees. "Oh, my God!" he said; "it's Sir Percival!"

As the words passed his lips, the clerk joined us—and, at the same moment, there was a last grating turn of the key in the lock.

"The Lord have mercy on his soul!" said the old man. "He is doomed and dead. He has hampered the lock."

I rushed to the door. The one absorbing purpose that had filled all my thoughts, that had controlled all my actions, for weeks and weeks past, vanished in an instant from my mind. All remembrance of the heartless injury the man's crimes had inflicted; of the love, the innocence, the happiness he had pitilessly laid waste; of the oath I had sworn in my own heart to summon him to the terrible reckoning that he deserved—passed from my memory like a dream. I remembered nothing but the horror of his situation. I felt nothing but the natural human impulse to save him from a frightful death.

"Try the other door!" I shouted. "Try the door into the church! The lock's hampered. You're a dead man if you waste another moment!"

There had been no renewed cry for help, when the key was turned for the last time. There was no sound, now, of any kind, to give token that he was still alive. I heard nothing but the quickening crackle of the flames, and the sharp snap of the glass in the skylight above.

I looked round at my two companions. The servant had risen to his feet: he had taken the lantern, and was holding it up vacantly at the door. Terror seemed to have struck him with downright idiocy—he waited at my heels, he followed me about when I moved, like a dog. The clerk sat crouched up on one of the tombstones, shivering, and moaning to himself. The one moment in which I looked at them was enough to show me that they were both helpless.

Hardly knowing what I did, acting desperately on the first impulse that occurred to me, I seized the servant and pushed him against the vestry wall. "Stoop!" I said, "and hold by the stones. I am going to climb over you to the roof—I am going to break the skylight, and give him some air!" The man trembled from head to foot, but he held firm. I got on his back, with my cudgel in my mouth; seized the parapet with both hands; and was instantly on

the roof. In the frantic hurry and agitation of the moment, it never struck me that I might let out the flame instead of letting in the air. I struck at the skylight, and battered in the cracked, loosened glass at a blow. The fire leaped out like a wild beast from its lair. If the wind had not chanced, in the position I occupied, to set it away from me, my exertions might have ended then and there. I crouched on the roof as the smoke poured out above me, with the flame. The gleams and flashes of the light showed me the servant's face staring up vacantly under the wall; the clerk risen to his feet on the tombstone, wringing his hands in despair; and the scanty population of the village, haggard men and terrified women, clustered beyond in the churchyard—all appearing and disappearing, in the red of the dreadful glare, in the black of the choking smoke. And the man beneath my feet!—the man, suffocating, burning, dying so near us all, so utterly beyond our reach!

The thought half maddened me. I lowered myself from the roof, by my hands, and dropped to the ground.

"The key of the church!" I shouted to the clerk. "We must try it that way—we may save him yet if we can burst open the inner door."

"No, no, no!" cried the old man. "No hope! the church key and the vestry key are on the same ring—both inside there! Oh, sir, he's past saving—he's dust and ashes by this time!"

"They'll see the fire from the town," said a voice from among the men behind me. "There's a ingine in the town. They'll save the church."

I called to that man—he had his wits about him—I called to him to come and speak to me. It would be a quarter of an hour at least before the town engine could reach us. The horror of remaining inactive, all that time, was more than I could face. In defiance of my own reason I persuaded myself that the doomed and lost wretch in the vestry might still be lying senseless on the floor, might not be dead yet. If we broke open the door, might we save him? I knew the strength of the heavy lock—I knew the thickness of the nailed oak—I knew the hopelessness of assailing the one and the other by ordinary means. But surely there were beams still left in the dismantled cottages near the church? What if we got one, and used it as a battering-ram against the door?

The thought leaped through me, like the fire leaping out of the shattered skylight. I appealed to the man who had spoken first of the fire-engine in the town. "Have you got your pickaxes handy?" Yes; they had. And a hatchet, and a saw, and a bit of rope? Yes! yes! yes! I ran down among the villagers, with the lantern in my hand. "Five shillings apiece to every man who helps me!" They started into life at the words. That ravenous second hunger of poverty—the hunger for money—roused them into tumult and activity in a moment. "Two of you for more lanterns if you have them! Two of you for the pickaxes and the tools! The rest after me to find the beam!" They cheered—with shrill starveling voices they cheered. The

women and the children fled back on either side. We rushed in a body down the churchyard path to the first empty cottage. Not a man was left behind but the clerk—the poor old clerk standing on the flat tombstone sobbing and wailing over the church. The servant was still at my heels; his white, helpless, panic-stricken face was close over my shoulder as we pushed into the cottage. There were rafters from the torn-down floor above, lying loose on the ground—but they were too light. A beam ran across over our heads, but not out of reach of our arms and our pickaxes—a beam fast at each end in the ruined wall, with ceiling and flooring all ripped away, and a great gap in the roof above, open to the sky. We attacked the beam at both ends at once. God! how it held—how the brick and mortar of the wall resisted us! We struck, and tugged, and tore. The beam gave at one end—it came down with a lump of brickwork after it. There was a scream from the women all huddled in the doorway to look at us—a shout from the men—two of them down, but not hurt. Another tug all together—and the beam was loose at both ends. We raised it, and gave the word to clear the doorway. Now for the work! now for the rush at the door! There is the fire streaming into the sky, streaming brighter than ever to light us! Steady, along the churchyard path—steady with the beam, for a rush at the door. One, two, three—and off. Out rings the cheering again, irrepressibly. We have shaken it already; the hinges must give, if the lock won't. Another run with the beam! One, two, three—and off. It's loose! the stealthy fire darts at us through the crevice all round it. Another, and a last rush! The door falls in with a crash. A great hush of awe, a stillness of breathless expectation, possesses every living soul of us. We look for the body. The scorching heat on our faces drives us back: we see nothing—above, below, all through the room, we see nothing but a sheet of living fire.

"Where is he?" whispered the servant, staring vacantly at the flames.

"He's dust and ashes," said the clerk. "And the books are dust and ashes—and oh, sirs! the church will be dust and ashes soon."

When they were silent again, nothing stirred in the stillness but the bubble and the crackle of the flames.

Hark!

A harsh rattling sound in the distance—then, the hollow beat of horses' hoofs at full gallop—then, the low roar, the all-predominant tumult of hundreds of human voices clamouring and shouting together. The engine at last!

The people about me all turned from the fire, and ran eagerly to the brow of the hill. The old clerk tried to go with the rest; but his strength was exhausted. I saw him holding by one of the tombstones. "Save the church!" he cried out, faintly, as if the firemen could hear him already. "Save the church!"

The only man who never moved was the servant. There he stood, his eyes still fastened on

the flames in a changeless, vacant stare. I spoke to him, I shook him by the arm. He was past rousing. He only whispered once more, "Where is he?"

In ten minutes, the engine was in position; the well at the back of the church was feeding it; and the hose was carried to the doorway of the vestry. If help had been wanted from me, I could not have afforded it now. My energy of will was gone—my strength was exhausted—the turmoil of my thoughts was fearfully and suddenly stilled, now I knew that he was dead. I stood useless and helpless—looking, looking, looking into the burning room.

I saw the fire slowly conquered. The brightness of the glare faded—the steam rose in white clouds, and the smouldering heaps of embers showed red and black through it on the floor. There was a pause—then, an advance altogether of the firemen and the police, which blocked up the doorway—then a consultation in low voices—and then, two men were detached from the rest, and sent out of the churchyard through the crowd. The crowd drew back in dead silence, to let them pass.

After a while, a great shudder ran through the people; and the living lane widened slowly. The men came back along it, with a door from one of the empty houses. They carried it to the vestry, and went in. The police closed again round the doorway; and men stole out from among the crowd by twos and threes, and stood behind them, to be the first to see. Others waited near, to be the first to hear. Women were among these last—women with children in their arms.

The tidings from the vestry began to flow out among the crowd—they dropped slowly from mouth to mouth, till they reached the place where I was standing. I heard the questions and answers repeated again and again, in low, eager tones, all round me.

"Have they found him?" "Yes."—"Where?" "Against the door. On his face."—"Which door?" "The door that goes into the church. His head was against it. He was down on his face."—"Is his face burnt?" "No." "Yes, it is." "No: scorched, not burnt. He lay on his face, I tell you."—"Who was he? A lord, they say." "No, not a lord. *Sir* Something; *Sir* means Knight." "And Baroknight, too." "No." "Yes, it does."—"What did he want in there?" "No good, you may depend on it."—"Did he do it on purpose?"—"Burn himself on purpose?"—"I don't mean himself; I mean the vestry."—"Is he dreadful to look at?" "Dreadful!"—"Not about the face, though?" "No, no; not so much about the face."—"Don't anybody know him?" "There's a man says he does."—"Who?" "A servant, they say. But he's struck stupid-like, and the police don't believe him."—"Don't anybody else know who it is?" "Hush!"

The loud, clear voice of a man in authority silenced the low hum of talking all round me, in an instant.

"Where is the gentleman who tried to save him?" said the voice.

"Here, sir—here he is!" Dozens of eager faces pressed about me—dozens of eager arms, parted the crowd. The man in authority came up to me with a lantern in his hand.

"This way, sir, if you please," he said, quietly.

I was unable to speak to him; I was unable to resist him, when he took my arm. I tried to say that I had never seen the dead man, in his lifetime—that there was no hope of identifying him by means of a stranger like me. But the words failed on my lips. I was faint and silent and helpless.

"Do you know him, sir?"

I was standing inside a circle of men. Three of them, opposite to me, were holding lanterns low down to the ground. Their eyes, and the eyes of all the rest, were fixed silently and expectantly on my face. I knew what was at my feet—I knew why they were holding the lanterns so low to the ground.

"Can you identify him, sir?"

My eyes dropped slowly. At first, I saw nothing under them but a coarse canvas cloth. The dripping of the rain on it was audible in the dreadful silence. I looked up, along the cloth; and there at the end, stark and grim and black, in the yellow light—there, was his dead face.

So, for the first and last time, I saw him. So the Visitation of God ruled it that he and I should meet.

## THE PAPER WALL OF CHINA.

It is a serious political misfortune for a nation to have a number of pretenders to its throne. England is far happier under undisputed Victoria than she could be with contending Roses, white and red. Fortunate for France will be the day when the last, except one, of her rival royal branches and imperial dynasties shall become extinct.

In like manner, it is a heavy philosophical and religious misfortune, a grave source of ethical weakness, when a wide-extended population has a plurality of claimants on its faith, its worship, and its obedience—by which plurality mere sects in religious belief are not meant, like the various forms of dissent in Protestant churches, because they are all one in principle, equally based on their common Christianity. Throughout all Europe, with the exception of Turkey, the reigning faith, without the shadow of a single serious rival pretender, is some mode of Christianity, whether Latin, Greek, or Lutheran; and in Turkey, and in several other Oriental regions, Mahomedanism is equally the undisputed master of the hearts and souls of men. But if we travel further eastward, and enter China, instead of one acknowledged Divine Founder, or Inspired Prophet, we find philosophers many, gods hardly any, and moral doctrines so confused and contradictory, that the result is like the blending of all colours, white—a blank. The acid of one sage neutralises the alkali of another; do-nothing and know-nothing are the antidotes applied to feverish excesses of free-thinking and free-acting; and, in conse-

quence, the people may be said to have no religion or morality. Faith, properly so called, they can attain to none; and for ethical teachers, they have to lean on a succession of broken reeds. Confucius, their most revered instructor, is nothing more than a good sort of man, at the very best. His authority and influence on the Chinese of the present day is about equal to that of Plato or Socrates on a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. Other Chinese philosophers are merely vanished phantoms of wisdom, who once uttered, during the distant past, dark, sometimes unintelligible, sayings.

The long and solitary existence of the Chinese empire is a unique fact in the general history of humanity. The peoples of antiquity were only acquainted with it through its manufactured articles, and were quite ignorant of its internal civilisation. The travellers who succeeded in visiting it during the middle ages, did so in a hurried and superficial manner, and brought home only very incomplete accounts. It was not till the Jesuits had accomplished a lengthened residence in the capital, and so had the leisure to collect documents relative to the history of Chinese civilisation, that Europe became at all acquainted with the literature of the Flowery Land.

The peculiar characteristic of Chinese civilisation is its paradoxical code of morality, which although abounding in the noblest maxims founded on eternal truth, is a defective and incomplete system of ethics. It extravagantly extols the observance of private and public duties, but leaves the universal rights of men, that is, social justice, quite in the shade. It loudly proclaims the reciprocal obligations between man and man, but it has no valid sanction to give to them; it blames every abuse of power, but has no authority strong enough to prevent it; it declares every human being responsible for his deeds, and yet makes the son a compulsory partner in his father's guilt; it preaches humanity, and retains slavery; it exalts filial piety, and leaves the mother, the wife, and the daughter, in a state of servility and degradation. It has too many moral teachers, because they are not agreed; and not one of them has strength enough to command implicit obedience. There is no religious or legal obstacle to prevent persons in high places from preferring the gratification of their passions to the performance of their duties, if their defective conscience so incline them. For four thousand years, Chinese public morality has been dependent on the chance of a good example being set them by their ruler for the time being.

The ante-historical traditions of China curiously agree with the development theories which certain modern philosophers have lately enunciated. Their annalists reckon by millions of years; and proceed in a mode which might be called scientific, by dividing the primitive period into three kingdoms: the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of earth, and the kingdom of man. When they come to man, far from describing him as created by a single act of the Divine Will, ready en-

dowed, like Adam, with the highest faculties of mind and body, and then fallen in consequence of some revolt against his Maker's injunctions—they attribute to him a half-animal, half-human form, wandering in the forests, dwelling in caves, and climbing trees after the manner of apes, in whose society, or in contests with whom, he spent his life. It is even stated that men, constantly associating with the brutes, never dreamt of harming them. Does that mean that man was not yet carnivorous, nor thought of clothing himself with skins?

Meanwhile, the development of his peculiar aptitudes gradually weaned him from a state of nature. The usefulness of his hands and the agility of his body, aided by his inventive talents, led him to discover numerous resources, and favoured the propagation of the human race. As population increased, the animals, the tradition adds, were obliged to dispute with man the ground on which he encroached from day to day. To protect himself from their attacks, he built huts, fashioned weapons, and banded himself in clans or tribes.

The historical epoch begins with the reign of Yao. The Chou-king, the first sacred book of China, is nothing more than a summary of the political and moral history of China, from the Emperor Yao (before Christ, 2357), until the epoch of the philosophers. Confucius endorsed its authority, but it has no pretensions to be a revelation from any celestial power; for Chinese requirements, a human emperor is celestial enough. At Yao's death, the nation put on mourning for three whole years.

The philosophers who subsequently succeeded to the popular consideration, were Lao-tseu and Khoun-fou-tseu, better known as Confucius. The doctrine of the former may be summed up in the well-known parody, "For nought is everything, and everything is nought." Abnegation and impossibility are the highest virtues. The most innocent enjoyments, all arts, affections, and sentiments are bad; knowledge and activity are bad. The wise man remains absorbed in contemplation of the Tao, the spiritual, the indistinct. He who comprehends the Tao, is alike inaccessible to favour and to disgrace, to profit and to loss, to honours and to ignominy. The holy man clothes himself in coarse garments, while he conceals precious jewels in his heart. Those jewels are gentleness, resignation, humility, the love of man; but at the same time contempt of the world, the absence of every desire, the hatred of all action; charity on the one hand, indifference on the other. In short, Lao-tseu lived during a dissolute period; to reform it, he preached the extreme of asceticism.

Confucius (born 551 years before the Christian era) was by far the most practical of the Chinese sages; but he made no pretence to anything higher than human wisdom. A short sample of his maxims is all we can give: Do not contract friendship with persons who are morally and intellectually inferior to yourself. At table, do not try to satiate or glut your appetite. Avoid the enjoyments of ease and effeminacy. Keep strict



watch over your words. Frequent persons with right principles, in order to regulate your conduct by them. If poor, learn to live contented in your poverty; if rich, take delight in the practice of social virtues.

An enemy to every form of dispute, Confucius allows of no disagreement in games in which a mark is thrown or shot at; he even urges the victor to yield precedence to his vanquished adversary, and to go into the public room to take a cup of tea with him. In this he agrees to a certain extent with Lao-tseu, who reproved the legitimate satisfaction which a man feels when he has gained a victory. To distinguish the superior man from the vulgar man, Confucius said that the one is inspired by justice, and the other by the love of gain. An attribute of the superior man is to be slow in his words and rapid in his actions. The superior man, in a high position, displays no ostentation or pride; while the vulgar man manifests them in the lowest conditions of life. The superior man, if he utter only a single word, shows that he is very enlightened respecting the principles of things; by a single word, if spoken without circumspection, he might betray his ignorance. But can he be considered a superior man, who puts no circumspection in his speech? Confucius does not approve of the art of speaking cleverly; he believes that it engenders hatred between man and man. For his own part, in his intercourse with others, he listens to what they say, but pays most attention to what they do. He profoundly despised men who, arrived at a certain age, had done nothing but lead a slothful life; for he did not allow that any one, whether rich or poor, can dispense with the duties which he owes to society. One of his former friends, Youan-jung, older than himself, sat idly by the roadside with his legs crossed: Confucius said, "In childhood, to be wanting in fraternal deference; in manhood, to have done no praiseworthy action; in old age, not to die; is to be good for nothing." And he struck one leg with his stick, in sign of contempt.

Confucius spoke little of supernatural things, of genii or spirits. By this prudent reserve, if his disciples are not led to resolve the questions of the origin, and the end of men and things, to analyse the nature and the faculties of the soul, to discover the action of a Superior Power on the universe, they are kept from disputes about doubtful questions, they are not tempted to propagate their creed by fire and sword; and if they die in ignorance of their destiny after this life, they are saved from falling victims to fanaticism and intolerance. He preferred study to meditation, and avows that he had passed whole days without food and nights without sleep, and had derived no advantage whatever from the infliction; on the contrary, he holds that study is in itself a happiness.

Confucius married at the early age of nineteen. History is silent respecting his wife. The Chinese people practically adopt the maxim of the Greek philosopher: "the best-conducted woman is she who is the least talked about."

In this case, the women of China must always have been particularly virtuous, for the annals of the country rarely mention them; and unfortunately, when Chinese writers condescend to do so, it is only to speak ill of them.

The condition of women in China is exactly the same at the present day as it has been from all recorded time—inferior, servile, degraded, unprotected. Their birth is a misfortune, a curse of Heaven upon the family. In the eyes of the Chinese, the female sex hardly belongs to the human race. M. Hue relates a conversation he had with a Chinaman, who remarked, "I have often heard you say that people became Christians in order to save their souls. Is that really the case?"

"Yes; that is the object proposed to be attained."

"But then, why do women turn Christians?"

"For the same reason as the men: to save their souls."

"But they have no souls!" he exclaimed; "and consequently you cannot make Christians of them. When I get home, I will tell my wife that she has a soul, and she will be not a little astonished to hear it."

Beyond the culture of cotton and the rearing of silkworms, there is no employment for female hands; which makes them a heavy burden to their parents, and often the cause of poverty. Hence the number of infanticides committed on female children, in spite of the severity of the laws, and the frequent interference of the authorities. In 1848 the criminal judge of the province of Canton was obliged to issue an edict, which contained this remarkable passage: "Although there are establishments for foundlings of the female sex, nevertheless we have been unable to destroy the revolting practice which is an outrage to morality and civilisation, and which breaks the harmony of Heaven. Children of both sexes belong to the harmony of Heaven; and if a daughter is born to you, you ought to bring her up, although she be not of the same value to you as a boy. If you kill her, how can you hope to have sons? How is it that you are not afraid of the consequences of your unworthy conduct, and especially of the justice of Heaven? You will repent of it after your life, but it will then be too late. If you abandon your daughters, when you are discovered you will be punished according to the laws, for you are unnatural; and for the crime of murdering your infants, you are unworthy of any indulgence."

The daughters whom they condescend to rear have a sad and isolated lot; they remain shut up in the paternal mansion, solely occupied with sewing and housewifery. Wealthy parents give them a slight education, but in general their instruction is confined to needlework. No public school is open for girls. When they are old enough to marry, their parents think much less about their future happiness than of their own private interest, and solely endeavour to conclude a sort of bargain by selling them to the highest bidder. Their father and mother, or in default of them their nearest relations, exercise

an absolute authority over the marriage of children; young people are allowed to have no will in the matter. Sometimes two friends bind themselves by an oath to marry their unborn babes, if they turn out of different sexes. The promise is sealed by tearing their tunics, each giving to the other the portion rent off. Unions formed under such conditions as these are scarcely likely to be of long duration. Incompatibilities of temper soon declare themselves, and the woman, being the weakest, suffers the most; for the husband has complete authority over her. He may ill treat her with impunity, and may compel her to associate with several secondary wives.

Nevertheless, Buddhism and Lamaism, which permit women to take a certain part in public worship, afford an opportunity for some of them to escape from the sorrows of social life by making a religious and monastic profession, under the title of Bonzesses; and their number has considerably increased under the Tartar domination. There is also a female sect called the Abstinentes, especially in the southern provinces. It is a corporation of ascetics, who make a vow to abstain from everything that has enjoyed life, and to eat nothing but vegetables. They go in procession to certain pagodas, and hope, as the reward of their devotion, to obtain the transmigration of their souls into the bodies of men—the ne plus ultra of their ambition.

The low opinion which the Chinese entertain of women may be gathered from their proverbs relating to them: A bad husband is sometimes a good father; a bad wife is never a good mother.—A husband must be very foolish to be afraid of his wife; but a wife is a hundred thousand times more foolish not to be afraid of her husband.—Four things are required of a woman: that virtue dwell in her heart, that modesty shine on her forehead, that gentleness flow from her lips, and that work employ her hands.—To cultivate virtue is the science of men, and to renounce science is the virtue of women.—Silence and blushes are the eloquence of woman; modesty is her courage.—A woman never praises without calumniating.—Their tongue is women's sword, and they never let it grow rusty.

In spite of the differences of aptitude, usages, and local manners which each district of China impresses on its inhabitants, a general type reunites them and forms them into a people very distinct from every other. This uniformity is especially manifested in their traditional habits of politeness, whose rules date from an epoch three thousand years ago. In this respect, all the Chinese appear to have been brought up in the same school, and are finished Tartufes of urbanity, courtesy, and flattering speeches. But this politeness, acquired from their earliest childhood, has become so inherent in their social life as to seem perfectly natural. The eulogistic, emphatical, and hyberbolical expressions with which they mutually address each other, form an integral part of their conversation, and add to it a certain grace by which the traveller is deceived; for he takes for natural amenity of cha-

racter what are merely external acts of pure convention. For instance, they never state their own opinion without adding that it is only the notion of a stupid man, of a narrow intellect; and they never discuss the opinions of others without treating them as brilliantly luminous and vast in conception. There are a great number of metaphorical expressions full of respect and humility which are current in everyday language.

If the Chinese were to practise strictly their traditional morality, and notably that of Confucius, whom they incessantly quote, they would be the most just, liberal, merciful, and affable people in the world, the most scrupulous observers of family and social duties. There can hardly be found a theory of ethics more complete, more thoroughly impregnated with good common sense, than that which is contained in the classic books, the basis of their education. But if moral laws are not enforced by religious doctrines they soon fall into neglect, through ignorance, through the carelessness of the government, through the exclusive attention paid to material interests, and especially through the abject and uneducated condition of the women, which prevents their exerting any effectual and humanising influence. This fact alone suffices to explain the moral and intellectual degradation of the Chinese people.

The veneration, approaching to a sort of worship, which is paid to the memory of Confucius, is addressed rather to his doctrines than to his person. The temples erected in his honour are monuments dedicated to the fame of his books. His maxims profess to have the force of law for the public authorities as well as for heads of families; the founders of dynasties, and even the Tartar conquerors, were accepted by the nation because they promised to rule according to his principles.

There circulate in China Collections of Thoughts and Proverbs, forming a sort of catechisms for the uses of persons of all ages. Some of them are not without their merit. For instance: The sage does good exactly as he breathes; it is the necessity of his life.—It is possible to be decent without being well conducted; but it is impossible to be well conducted without being decent.—Raillery is the lightning-flash darting out of the thunder-cloud of calumny.—Man may bow before virtue, but virtue never bows before man.—Virtue does not give talents, but supplies their place; talents neither give nor serve as the substitute for virtue.—Ceremonial is the smoke of friendship.—If the heart goes only half way with the intellect, the most solid thoughts give nothing but a glass of light; this is the reason why science is so little persuasive and probity so eloquent.

Women's minds are made of quicksilver, and their heart is of wax. [This maxim might be interpreted in woman's favour, if we take its meaning to be that she has a ready intelligence and a tender heart; but such an interpretation is contrary to the opinion of the Chinese themselves.]—Every bit you shorten of a woman's

foot grows at the end of her tongue. [Is compressing the feet a more foolish custom than tight-lacing? It is certainly less dangerous to health.]

One day is as good as three, if you do everything at its proper time.—The less indulgence you yield to yourself, the more you have to spare for others.—Rich folk find relations in the most distant lands; the poor find none, not even in the bosom of their own family.—The truths which we are the least fond of learning, are those which it most behoves us to know.—We pardon everything in the person who never pardons himself.—Rich people have the greatest number of wants.—We ought not to employ those whom we suspect, nor suspect those whom we employ.—You never need have all your wits about you so much as when you have to do with a fool.—Dissolute prince, pitiless master.—Marble, however polished it may be, is not the less cold nor hard for that; the same is the case with courtiers.—It is better to save one dying man, than to bury a hundred dead.

The leading feature of Chinese morality is filial piety; it is the starting-point of every virtue, of every social duty, the basis of family ties, the principle of government, the fundamental law of all other laws. Consequently, the penal code of China contains several clauses concerning the duties of children towards their father and mother. It stigmatises as impious whoever brings a lawsuit against his near relations, insults them, or omits to put on mourning for them. The obligatory rules for mourning are three years for relations of the first degree, nine months for those of the second, five for those of the third degree, and three months for the rest. Death is the punishment for striking one's senior relations, for insulting or falsely accusing them. Parricide, in particular, is punished by torture to death with knives. The writings of philosophers, the proclamations of emperors, the addresses of mandarins, are continually eulogising filial piety, and invoking it on every occasion, even à propos of resistance to authority, disobedience to the law, infringements of the rights of property, and attempts on the life of others. On the other hand, they refer to filial piety, acts of obedience, compassion, probity, and courage. In consequence of this principle, the titles of the first mandarins are transmissible not to their sons but to their ancestors. By an honorary right, the glory acquired by a son reverts to his father.

Confucius, in reply to his disciple Tse-hia, who asked, "How ought a son to behave to the enemy of his father?" answered, "He will lie down to sleep in garments of mourning, with no pillow but his weapons; he will accept no employment, and will not suffer his father's enemy to remain on the earth. If he meets him, whether in the market or in the palace court, he will not return home to fetch his arms, but will attack him on the spot." He moreover said, "Your father's murderer ought not to remain beneath the same sky with yourself; you must not lay down your arms whilst your brother's murderer

exists; and you cannot dwell in the same kingdom with the murderer of your friend."

Confucius might have done better had he advised an appeal to the law for the punishment of the murderer; but his words are only the expression of a noble sentiment pushed to the extreme.

According to law, a father may, first, sell, pledge, hire, or bind his children; secondly, keep them always in a state of minority; thirdly, dispose by will of the whole of his property to their prejudice; and, fourthly, at any time reassert his paternal rights. At his death, the paternal uncle, or the elder brother, inherits those rights. The law even pursues any neglect of the mourning prescribed for near relations. The dominant power of filial love is expressed by numerous sayings which are in everybody's mouth; such as: A good son never believes that he has succeeded in any undertaking until he has obtained the suffrage of his father.—To praise a son, is to boast of oneself; to blame a father, is to disgrace oneself.—What a good son fears, is, not the threats, the reproaches, nor the violence of his father, but his silence.—A good son, is a good brother, a good husband, a good father, a good relation, a good friend, a good neighbour, and a good citizen; a bad son, is nothing but a bad son.—He who fears that the thunder-bolt should wake his parents, has no fear on his own account.—Respect and love are the two wings of filial piety.

In spite of this worship paid by the son to the parent, there are laws and customs which offer a sad contrast to its spirit. Thus, a son must refuse to recognise as his mother his father's wife, if repudiated by him, and also his widow, if she marries again. The son of one of his father's secondary wives must obey and serve the first wife as if she were his mother, and wear mourning for her, to the exclusion of his real mother. It ought to be stated, to Confucius's honour, that he did not dictate any of these arbitrary and inconsistent laws; they were introduced by Buddhist or Tartar influence, and made to prevail over his more natural teachings.

A singular mode of testifying filial piety consists in preparing, during the lifetime of a father or mother, the coffin destined to receive the remains. The sum expended on this ill-omened present is large in proportion to the strength of affection which it is proposed to manifest. It is presented with all due form, in the hope of causing an agreeable surprise. The serious illness of a parent affords the opportunity of displaying a lively interest in his health, by bringing the coffin and placing it close to his bed; he can then die with the delightful satisfaction of knowing that everything has been prepared to render him due funeral honour. The coffin in China plays the same part that the viaticum does in Roman Catholic countries. This custom habituates them to regard the approach of death without emotion. Chinese persons in easy circumstances find a pleasure in undertaking their own proper funerals and arranging a bier that suits their taste.

Although the supernatural occupies a certain amount of space in Chinese tradition, it remains rather in the state of superstition than of religious belief. Heaven, or the Supreme Being, hold, with them, the place of our Providence; they invoke it as an expression of Infinite Power, but do not honour it either with sacrifices or with public prayers. In short, there is no state religion in China; the prevailing form of worship, if we can give it that name, consists in manifestations of filial piety, practised in honour of Heaven, the emperor, and parents. Nevertheless, certain solemn days are consecrated to spirits, while others are devoted to the carrying of offerings to the temples of Buddha. The pagodas are the object of frequent processions, and the tombs of ancestors are altars around which families unite to pay homage to dear or illustrious memories. The bonzes and bonzesses are mendicants rather than an officiating priesthood.

The indifference of the Chinese in matters of religion explains the difficulty which Christianity meets with in taking root in the Celestial Empire. There exists no trace of its introduction before the end of the sixteenth century, when Father Ricci contrived to penetrate into the interior. In 1724, the Emperor Young-tching proscribed the new worship, not as a religion, but as being the cause or the pretext of secret societies, of meetings of men and women, contrary to law. The Tat-sin-leu-li contains the following article (section 162): "When it shall be discovered that persons have secretly offered incense at the performances of prohibited modes of worship, and have assembled their followers during the night to instruct them in their maxims, the principal minister of those abominations shall be imprisoned for the prescribed period, and then strangled. His disciples shall each receive a hundred strokes of the bamboo, and shall be banished for life." This is plain speaking.

Three of the principal Jesuits who were then at the Court of Peking having petitioned the emperor to revise his decision, he replied: "You say that your law is not a false law. If I thought that it was false, who could hinder me from demolishing your churches and expelling you? False laws are those which, under the pretext of inculcating virtue, fan the spirit of revolt. But what would you say if I were to send a troop of bonzes and lamas into your country to preach their laws? How would you receive them? You wish all the Chinese to turn Christians: but the Christians whom you make acknowledge no one but you. In troubled times they would listen to you, and to no one else. I know that at present there is nothing to fear; but when vessels arrive by thousands and tens of thousands, disorders might arise." But the missionaries have encountered fewer obstacles in the ill will of the government than in the indifference of the people. Only recently M. Hue has informed us of their disdainfully repulsing the Roman Catholic faith.

Indifference in religious matters is not peculiar to the people alone; it is participated by

the great men and by the head of the state himself. The last emperor, Tao-kouang, a short time before his accession to the throne, addressed a proclamation to the people, in which, passing in review all known religions, Christianity included, he came to the conclusion that all were false alike, and merited equal contempt.

If, therefore, Christians are persecuted at the present day, it is on account of their private meetings, which it is feared may degenerate into political associations formed expressly to open China to Occidental nations. Besides, it is a logical effect of their religious apathy that the Chinese should be unable to understand why we should travel so far and encounter such sufferings for the sake of teaching them miraculous facts and doctrines, which are admitted by their propagators themselves to be mysterious and difficult of explanation.

Pac-king, viceroy of the province of Tse-tchouan, inquired of M. Hue, the missionary, where he wished to go.

"We want to go to Thibet," was the reply.

"What business calls you there?"

"The preaching of the Christian religion."

"You had better go and preach it at home."

#### TO NICEA, THE BIRTHPLACE OF GARIBALDI.

NICEA! thou wast rear'd of those  
Who left Phœcæa crush'd by foes,  
And swore they never would return  
Until that red-hot ploughshare burn  
Upon the waves whereon 'twas thrown.  
Such were thy sires, such thine alone.

Cyrus had fail'd with myriad host  
To chain them down; long tempest-tost,  
War-worn, yet unsubdued, they found  
No refuge on Hellenic ground.  
All fear'd the despot.

Far from home

The Cimbri saw the exiles come,  
Victorious o'er a Punic fleet,  
Seeking not conquest, but retreat,  
Small portion of a steril shore  
Solliciting, nor seizing more.  
There rose Massilia.

Years had past,

And once again the Punic mast  
Display'd its banner; once again  
Phœceans dash'd it on the main.  
With hymns of triumph they rais'd high  
A monument to Victory.  
Hence was thy name, Ionian town!  
Passing all Gallia's in renown  
Firmly thou stoodest; not by Rome,  
Conqueror of Carthage, overcome,  
Fearing not war, but loving peace,  
Thou sawest thy just wealth increase.

Alas! what art thou at this hour?  
Bound victim of perfidious Power!

In fields of blood, however brave,  
Base is the man who sells his slave;  
But basest of the base is he  
Who sells the faithful and the free.  
Bystanders we (oh shame!) have been,  
And this foul traffic tamely seen.

Thou livest undejected yet,  
Nor thy past glories wilt forget.



No, no; that city is not lost,  
Which one heroic soul can boast,  
So glorious none thy annals show  
As he whom God's own voice bade go,  
And raise an empire where the best  
And bravest from their toils may rest.  
Enna for them shall bloom again,  
And Peace hail Garibaldi's reign.

#### VERY SINGULAR THINGS IN THE CITY.

It is a singular thing that all the working engineers, and stout-armed "navigators" who planned, and dug out, and built up the Great Northern Railway, were compelled, before they commenced their labours, to wait for the oath of one man, who happened to be William James Robson, the future forger. The "compulsory powers" of a railway act cannot be put in force, and the "first sod" of a railway cannot be turned, until oath has been made before a magistrate that a certain amount of "capital" has been subscribed. The man who cast up the sums contained in the "deed of subscription," and who certified that the requisite amount was secured, was William James Robson, a lawyer's clerk, who was afterwards in the Crystal Palace share office in the City of London.

It is a very singular thing that a railway set in motion, so to speak, by such a man, and falling, as early as 1848, into the hands of an ambitious costermonger, named Leopold Redpath, was not robbed to a much greater extent than nearly a quarter of a million sterling. It is a singular thing that a Board of Directors should have engaged this man without knowing that he once hawked fish and poultry about the streets of Folkestone, Kent; that he was successively a lawyer's clerk, a shipping clerk, and a bankrupt "insurance-broker," paying half-a-crown in the pound. It is a singular thing that these directors should have placed this man in an office where the secretary's signature was kept in the form of a stamp, which stamp was in a wooden book-case, accessible to any clerk, at any hour of the day, for the purpose of signing "stock certificates." It is a singular thing, in an undertaking representing some five millions of capital, that "stock certificates" duly signed, but brought in, under the operation of sales on the Stock Exchange, to be cancelled, were put away uncanceled in an ordinary cupboard, open to every one employed in the "registrar's office." It is a singular thing that when large irregularities on the part of Mr. Registrar Redpath were discovered two years and a half before his directors had the courage to arrest him for fraud, he was allowed to pay back certain sums of money, by which he stopped inquiry. It is a singular thing that if his career had been cut short at this point, at Midsummer, 1854, and had not been suffered to extend to Christmas, 1856, the shareholders would have saved about seventy thousand pounds in shares and dividends. Instead of this, he was allowed to take a lofty tone about his means and position "as a gentleman," and

some of his directors and fellow-labourers were afraid of losing so valuable and important a servant! It is a still more singular thing that if an inquiry had been at once instituted in 1852, when the first warning of "payments in excess of dividends" should have been noticed and acted upon, the delinquent would have stolen only about seventy thousand pounds, instead of two hundred and forty thousand.

It is a singular thing that the chief auditor chosen for the accounts of this vast and complicated enterprise, should have been a highly respectable merchant, no doubt, but one who had been so unsuccessful in "auditing" his own business transactions, that in the course of eleven years he had been robbed by a clerk of thirty thousand pounds. It is a singular feature in the life of this auditor, that he *never saw Redpath in his life*. Redpath was about the office, to some purpose, for nearly ten years; but the leading auditor never saw him, to his knowledge, on any occasion.

It is a singular thing that this same auditor was a Director of the Union Bank of London; and that Mr. Leopold Redpath kept his banking account at this bank. It is not to be presumed that an auditor of a railway, who never saw its chief registrar, and that registrar so remarkable a man, should, in his capacity of a bank director, know much about the nature, amount, and character of the different bank accounts. An auditor who led the way in signing that extraordinary document (detailed at page 203, in No. 59 of this journal), wherein it was stated that the "accounts and books in every department" of the Great Northern Railway, were "correct and most satisfactorily kept," about five months before the great forger was brought to justice, could hardly be expected to pry much into bank ledgers, or to gather much information if he did pry. Perhaps he relied too much upon the "Governor" of the Union Bank, Sir Peter Laurie, and upon this worthy magistrate's world-famous reputation for "putting" everything like an irregularity "down." An account, such as Redpath must have kept at the Union Bank, must have been highly "irregular," and must have shown suspicious "irregularities," for a railway servant, to say nothing of an ex-fish and poultry hawker, and a bankrupt insurance-broker.

It is a singular thing that in this large and flourishing joint-stock bank, with its many branches, was William George Pullinger, the chief of modern forgers. He has been hurried off the scene in a very summary way, and is beyond the reach of cross-examination; but it requires little knowledge of his transactions to opine that he was not ignorant of Leopold Redpath's operations. He could not copy the ex-fish and poultry hawker, by manufacturing shares, but he could extract even more gold from his employers' pockets with a simple "pass-book." A "pass-book" costs only a few shillings at any City stationer's, or less than the price of a coarse and vulgar crowbar. The little profit that the Union Bank of London

secured by harbouring the banking account of "Leopold Redpath, Esq.," the bankrupt insurance-broker, was more than counterbalanced, in all probability, by the bad example it placed before the bank clerks. It is evident that William George Pullinger was not improved by coming into contact with a banking account like Redpath's; and it is evident that the Union Bank of London was not improved by the demoralisation of William George Pullinger. One of the statements to be submitted to the suffering shareholders at the next half-yearly meeting in July, should run thus:

SPECIAL PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT (No. 1).  
Showing gain by a Fraudulent Customer; and loss  
by a Fraudulent Clerk.

Dr.				Cr.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To gain on Redpath's Account (Fraudulent Customer),				By loss on Pullinger (Fraudulent Clerk),			
Estimated Balance } 300				Principal Interest } 263,000			
loss } 292,700				about } 30,000			
	293,000				293,000		
				Loss. Balance down	292,700		

It is a singular thing that the estimated item of thirty thousand pounds for "interest" has not yet appeared in any directorial statement of the amount of Pullinger's frauds. The capital so fully employed by Pullinger, might have been profitably employed by the bank, for it is evident that as they never missed it, when it was stolen, it must have been an idle and unnecessary "balance." There is an evil sometimes, it would seem, in being excessively prosperous.

It is a very singular thing that shareholders, in the face of such warnings as these, should still cling to an empty, because a low-priced, system of audit. Whenever their affairs are purposely entangled by men like Leopold Redpath, and they have to call in professional accountants, and resort to an "independent investigation," they then learn that real auditing is a necessary part of a business organisation, and that it becomes all the more costly the longer it has been neglected. The damage done to a large enterprise by half-shareholder, half-honorary, five, ten, fifteen, and twenty-pounds-charging auditors is seldom even explained, and *never repaired* by five, ten, fifteen, and twenty-thousand-pounds-charging accountants. The frauds of Redpath, if taken at five per cent. upon the amount, will represent an income *for ever*, of twelve thousand pounds per annum. The frauds of Pullinger, if treated in the same way, will represent a perpetual annual income of fourteen thousand and five hundred pounds.

The first sum would surely pay for the continuous and only effective audit of many British

railways—perhaps of all; and the second sum would probably do the same for all the joint-stock banks. It is a singular thing that shareholders, at present, are blind to this, and are satisfied with a few respectable, fully occupied, middle-aged gentlemen "auditors," who manage to "run in" to glance at the books and vouchers about twelve times, or less, in the course of the year. It is a singular thing that these shareholders look to future economy and future profit, to cover these heavy and periodical losses by fraud: forgetting that the future money saved or made is not the money that was lost, and that the same economy and industry might have been practised without the unhealthy spurring on of gigantic forgers, and thieves.

On the other hand, it is an equally singular thing that men of position, of means, and reputation, can be found to fill the chairs of amateur auditorship, for dinners, small patronage, and trifling fees. A new piano for Miss "Auditor," a new dress for Mrs. "Auditor," a family trip to Germany, or Italy, a few banquets at town and suburban taverns, may be very agreeable things in their way, if they be not purchased at too great a cost. A few "attendances," a few "signatures" may not appear much to give for such luxuries, if the *responsibility* incurred is carefully forgotten. The capital invested in British railways alone, is estimated at *four hundred millions sterling*. It is all "audited" by these daring amateurs.

### HIGHLY IMPROBABLE!

THE apartments assigned to Solomon Gunn, when—goodness knows why—he entered the old wilderness of an inn in the dirty town of Wake, consisted of a sitting-room and bed-chamber, adjoining each other, and both opening on a long corridor. The windows of the sitting-room looked into the main street, the one window of the bed-chamber into a narrow lane that ran along the side of the house.

In the sitting-room, hung against the wall that parted it from the bed-chamber, were two grim portraits, such as you may find by the dozen in the course of a journey through any of the broker-shop neighbourhoods of London. One represented a military gentleman, with a cocked hat, the other, a venerable civilian, with a bobwig; and both were executed in that wooden fashion which repels the mind from the supposition that any live specimen of humanity ever favoured the artist with a sitting. Nothing could be less remarkable than the circumstance that two ugly, old-fashioned pictures decorated the wall of a country inn; but it was very remarkable, indeed, that when Solomon Gunn stepped into the bed-chamber he found the same wall ornamented on the other side with two pictures representing the backs—yes, the *backs*—of the gentlemen in the adjoining room. Moreover, the pictures in the bed-chamber were so placed that they exactly corresponded to their companions in the sitting-

room—as exactly as if they had been the same articles painted on both sides, and fitted into a couple of apertures. Indeed, as they were painted on wood, and therefore returned a ligneous sound to inquiring knuckles, this might have actually been the case for all Mr. Solomon Gunn knew to the contrary.

The connoisseur of art is in the habit of walking round sculptured works, and contemplating them from various points of view, but few minds are prepared to find that a painted portrait has a back as well as a front. The antagonistic notions of flatness and solidity jarred together disagreeably in Solomon Gunn's mind, and caused it to fall into a morbid state of credulity, such as we feel in dreams. If the world ever contained a military hero and a civilian who insisted on having their backs and their pig-tails copied, by way of completion to the portraiture of their faces, what might it not contain?

Had the waiter been more communicative, perhaps some light might have been thrown on the extraordinary whim of the two venerable gentlemen, but, as it happened, the waiter was a taciturn, cadaverous-looking little man, who seemed always in a fidget to perform his duties as quickly as possible, and bustle out of the room.

"Very odd, those pictures!" Solomon Gunn contrived to ejaculate.

"Werry odd, werry odd, indeed; in short, it's an odd world altogether, as well I knows to my cost," was the only response.

Chimney ornaments, when composed of fragile materials, are always among the first victims of mischance, and if endowed with consciousness, would look forward to a general dusting as some South American people anticipate periodical earthquakes. The fact, therefore, that all the shepherds, shepherdesses, and Cupids that enlivened the mantelpiece of the sitting-room had lost their heads, was scarcely worthy of a passing observation. Still, Solomon Gunn's surprise was natural, when on the mantelpiece of the bed-chamber he found all the detached heads carefully placed on little velvet-covered stands, and shielded from dust by glass receivers, whereas the truncated carcases were exposed to the effect of every simoom that the house-broom might engender.

"Curious, those images!" said Solomon Gunn to the waiter.

"Werry cur'ous, werry cur'ous, indeed! In short, it's a cur'ous world altogether, as well I knows to my cost," was still the answer.

The waiter was hopeless; he had evidently been trained to a theory that the universe is a system of incongruities, all equally inexplicable, and, therefore, in perfect harmony with each other.

Perhaps, of all the animals that are kept for the recreation of mankind, the gold-fish is, after the first glance, the least interesting. That a well-stocked globe looks pretty in a luxuriously furnished apartment, is not to be denied; but such a globe offered as a sole object of contemplation,

is the reverse of exciting. It was rather with a gloomy listlessness, therefore, that Solomon Gunn hung over the very large globe of gold-fish that was placed in one of the corners of his sitting-room: though, indeed, those fish were curious beyond the average, being marked with a combination of red, yellow, and black, which in a cat would have been called tortoiseshell.

It was not till Solomon Gunn was in bed, that the gold-fish began to make any impression on his mind. He was very restless, sometimes fancying that he was sitting with his back to a sign-painter, who was taking his likeness; sometimes imagining that his body was in a first-class railway-carriage, while his head was in the luggage-van; and when he woke from the sort of doze that produced these vanities, his eye glanced at the pattern of his bed-curtain, which was faintly illuminated by a rushlight. Singular! the pattern was composed of fish, coloured exactly in the same manner as those that peopled the globe in the sitting-room.

This fact was so remarkable, that Solomon Gunn got out of bed, and stepped into the sitting-room to ascertain, by renewed observation, whether the real and the mimic fish were really semblances of each other, or whether his memory had been treacherous. No—his memory had been faithful. The gaslight outside, which shone powerfully into the room, showed him that the fish on the curtain veritably corresponded to those in the globe.

There was something frightful in this series of inconsistent consistencies. We can scarcely describe the feeling with which he walked up to one of the windows of the sitting-room, and looked into the main street, as if anxious to ascertain whether or not he belonged to the ordinary every-day world of shops and thoroughfares.

The clock of the nearest church was booming one, the shops were all shut, and the pavement was trod by a single person—a child of about three years old, who, with the greatest gravity, was drawing a little cart. A respectably dressed child too, that seemed perfectly satisfied with its occupation. This was a strange phenomenon at one o'clock in the morning.

Whilst the eyes of Solomon Gunn were riveted on this lonely child, he heard the tramp of an approaching policeman. The functionary of justice soon appeared, preceded by the radiating light of his official bull's-eye. He was on the same side of the way as the child, whom, of course, he would accost, and probably take to the station-house, as a place—not of harsh confinement, but of horrible refuge. No, he did nothing of the kind; he passed the child, without so much as a moment's pause, and continued his walk till he was lost in the distance. To suppose that he did not see the urehin, would be to suppose an impossibility, for it moved along the middle of the pavement, and the gas shone strongly upon it.

Presently Solomon Gunn heard the sound of wheels, and in a few moments an empty four-wheeled cab stopped at the edge of the pave-

ment, close to the mysterious child. Without the slightest appearance of surprise or alarm, but with every appearance of respect, the cabman alighted from his seat, and, carefully taking up the child, who made no resistance, placed it in the vehicle; he then mounted in most orderly fashion, and was speedily out of sight.

Almost in a state of frenzy did Solomon Gunn rush back to his bed-chamber; when he perceived a light opposite to the window, which, as has been said, looked upon a narrow lane. There was no gas in this lane, but, as he soon found, the light proceeded from the first floor window of the house opposite, and showed the interior of a small, meanly-furnished room.

Two old men, seated at opposite sides of a little table, were plainly visible. One was reading an old book bound in vellum, the other was smoking a pipe. After a while, the smoker, having knocked the ashes out of his pipe, refilled it, and breaking off the end that had been in his mouth, presented it to his companion, who gave him the book in return. The smoker was now the reader, and seemed to take up the subject just where his friend had left off; the reader was now the smoker, and looked as if he were completely absorbed in the contemplation of the clouds that he propelled. When the contents of the pipe had been reduced to ashes, he knocked them out, refilled the bowl, and he and his companion again interchanged occupations. This process was repeated again, and again, and again; the pipe becoming shorter at every fresh transfer, till it was almost reduced to the bowl. The last smoker then carefully put it into his waistcoat-pocket, while the last reader laid down the book. They then both walked close to the window, each with a candle in his hand, and presented their full faces to Solomon Gunn, whose eyes had been riveted on them for he knew not how long, and who now recognised them as the originals of the military gentleman and the civilian, whose portraits, front and back, adorned the sitting-room and the bed-chamber.

The most provoking part of this affair, however, was, that whenever Solomon Gunn described to his acquaintance the phenomena that had occupied his attention during his sojourn at this remarkable inn, he was invariably met with a manifestation of thorough incredulity. From hardened men of business, who can conceive nothing beyond the limits of their own narrow experience, this was to be expected; but he had no better success with the superstitious, the trustful, the romantic. His grandmother, who believed in ghosts rather more firmly than in flesh and blood, and who was always boring her friends with the interpretation of her dull dreams, nevertheless refused to believe his tale about the inn. His cousin Kitty, whose faith in the prophetic power of gipsies was utterly disgraceful to a civilised age, and who every day was anticipating a husband with a complexion "between a heart and a club," was a thorough infidel with respect

to everything connected with that unfortunate hostelry, and would invariably shake her head, and utter an admonishing "Come, come, Sol!" whenever he began to describe the two old men and the globe of gold-fish. His aunt, who almost made a profession of table-rapping, who kept a journal of her spiritual experiences, and who placed perfect confidence in every humbug who boasted that he had held converse with Julius Cæsar or Alexander the Great, became an incarnate sneer whenever he began to recount his series of odd coincidences. As for the more facetious of his male acquaintance, they expressed their incredulity with a coarse intrusive candour, that was thoroughly disgusting. The most indulgent among them all, just admitted that a lost child might possibly have been in the street at one o'clock in the morning, but further than that, would not concede a jot.

Three distinct hypotheses were advanced by different people to account for Solomon Gunn's singular narrative. According to one, he was inebriate on the night when he sojourned at the strange inn; according to another, he had mistaken a dream for a reality; according to a third, he had fallen into a dreadful habit of mendacity. The more advanced upholders of the last hypothesis doubted whether he had ever visited the town where the inn was; and a few actually went so far as to offer the proof of an alibi, and show that Solomon Gunn had passed the wonderful night at his own lodgings. As for an hypothesis to the effect that his statement might perhaps be true, or perhaps the exaggerated expression of a truth, such an hypothesis did not occur to a single individual among all Solomon's acquaintance.

Now, why was Solomon's narrative met with such absolute incredulity, even by the habitually credulous? It referred to no supernatural agency; it treated simply of a number of strange coincidences, and odd events, all explicable on natural grounds: though the facts that would probably account for them had not fallen within the sphere of Solomon's observation.

Here, indeed, was his weak point. Had his story wandered into a supernatural region, had it been embellished with so much as a single spectre, a considerable section of his friends would have listened to it with profound reverence. Those who concede one ghost will concede a hundred when required; and if the originals of the two mysterious portraits had glided into Solomon's bedroom with winding-sheets about their shoulders, they would not only have been implicitly believed in by Solomon's grandmother, aunt, and female cousin, but would have conferred passports of credibility on the lonely child, the headless shepherds, and the gold-fish. But inasmuch as the story kept within the limits of the natural world, all tested it by those common-sense arguments which they would have applied to the ordinary affairs of life, and all came to the conclusion that so many strange occurrences as Solomon Gunn had described, could



not have taken place within the compass of a single day.

A French philosopher of the last century asserted that it is by no means hard to make a multitude believe in an absolute impossibility, but that to persuade it of the truth of something that is extremely improbable, without being impossible, is difficult indeed. To illustrate this assertion we have told the story of Solomon Gunn.

### VOLUNTEER CAVALRY.

THERE is a great talk of raising corps of Volunteer Cavalry throughout England, in addition, of course, to the numerous regiments of rifle volunteers which have been formed in every part of the kingdom.

If appropriately dressed, well mounted, and usefully armed, volunteer cavalry can be made most effective, particularly when used, as such troops would be in England, purely on the defensive, and in their own country. As an old dragoon officer, the writer is of opinion that a thousand volunteer cavalry, if brought into the field as they ought to be, would do quite as good service in the defence of their country as a thousand regular cavalry. Further, if, in the event of an invasion of England, he was allowed his choice of commanding the Household Brigade of Cavalry, numbering some two thousand four hundred sabres, or a similar number of properly-trained and well-officered volunteer cavalry, he would, under all circumstances save that of a regular charge upon even ground like that of Hounslow Heath or Salisbury Plain, greatly prefer to lead the latter troops.

There is no country in the world where so many men of every class are good horsemen as in England. In France and other continental lands, the upper and some few of the middle classes ride occasionally to display themselves and their horses; but with us nearly every class ride, and ride for riding's sake. In what town out of Great Britain would we ever see—as is seen every week in London, Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, or Dublin—the lawyer, the doctor, the banker, or the merchant, one day trim and neat in his office or on 'Change—apparently without a thought beyond the case in court, the sickness of his patient, the rates of discount, or the price of cotton—the next day clad in scarlet and tops, well mounted, and riding to hounds? Nay, even of our listless "swells," who through the London season look as if they had barely energy to shave and dress, how many are there who in the hunting-field show themselves in the first rank of a numerous and hard-riding phalanx? The most courageous horseman the present writer ever saw—whether after an Indian boar on the Deccan Hills, or an English fox on the Leicestershire grass-lands, is a civil servant of the late East India Company, who lived for thirty years in the

land of the sun; the next best hand across country whom he can call to mind was a Manchester cotton-spinner; and the third best in his list is a lieutenant-colonel of infantry. Lower in the social scale, amongst tradesmen, shopkeepers, and small farmers, how many there are who can, how few who cannot, ride, although nearly all are untaught. There are very many more men—taking high and low, rich and poor—who can ride, in England, than who could shoot before the rifle corps were raised. In fact, we are a nation of horsemen, and with a little care and a little training, might turn out such a body of volunteer cavalry as the world has not yet seen.

It may be urged that the yeomanry regiments are composed of the riding classes, and that they hardly come up to the beau idéal of cavalry. This is true, but it is to be accounted for. The English yeomanry are—with all respect be it spoken—a bad imitation of all that is objectionable in the English dragoon; in the British horse soldier as he was—as in but too many respects he is—not as he ought to be. In all the yeomanry corps the writer has seen on parade, the men were more stiff-necked, more tightly strapped, more small-jacketed, more unwieldy armed, more German-seated on horseback, and had a more general appearance of pipe-clayed helplessness, than the most ultra regulation of our regular dragoon regiments.

English volunteer cavalry should be composed entirely of men not weighing more than eleven stone, who own at least one horse. No person should on any pretence whatever be enrolled in its ranks who is obliged to borrow or hire the horse of another. The great secret why in our Indian wars the irregular cavalry have their horses in better condition than the other mounted corps, is that almost every man is owner of the animal he rides. In some of these regiments a great number of horses are owned by one proprietor, who hires horsemen to ride them, but these corps never have their horses in as good condition as in troops where every man owns the charger he rides. All troops should practise in peace what they have to perform in war. The weapon or the uniform which is not suitable for a campaign should be made over to the "properties" of the nearest theatre; it is not fit for a soldier to use or to wear. Thus, if volunteers—like all other troops—are to be useful in the field, they should adhere strictly to the rules likely to make them so, and amongst these, one of the foremost should be one forbidding any member of the corps to ride other than his own horse on parade. Of late years a great improvement has been made in our English cavalry style of riding, the men being taught to use shorter stirrups, and adopt a much more hunting style of seat than formerly. The volunteer cavalry should in the first place be taught to ride, and should be brought together once a month or so to prove that they have not forgotten what they

have learnt. But this teaching should be simply how to manage their horses when together, to sit well and firmly, with a shorter seat than that of our present dragoon corps, and to be handy with their weapons when mounted. Their horse accoutrements should be very few and very simple. The plain every-day hunting saddle, covered with a plain, inexpensive, dark-coloured but uniform saddle-cloth, and a plain uniform bridle—each man using the bit to which his horse is best accustomed—would be all the trappings required, and could be provided by any large outfitter at a very small cost.

The arms of the volunteer cavalry should be a curved sharp-cutting sabre, and a short breech-loading rifle. No pains and no time should be spared in making the members of the corps good and expert swordsmen, mounted as well as dismounted. To use this arm well on horseback requires the rider to have complete command of his horse. One of the great faults of our English dragoons is, that they are not taught to be handy with their swords. Moreover, their swords are too straight in make, too blunt on the edge, and too large in the handle. The writer has taken an active part in four great cavalry engagements, besides having been present at more than a dozen cavalry "affairs" in India; but he can recollect only three occasions—one, the case of an officer of the 3rd Light Dragoons, one, the case of a trooper of the same regiment, one, the case of the English commander of an irregular corps—in which a direct cutting blow from a regulation cavalry sword took effect as it was intended. For all offensive purposes the regulation sword is of no more use than a walking-stick of iron would be; that is to say, it will knock down, but not cut through. Not so the native tulwar, or Indian sabre, used by the natives all over the East, and also by the troopers in our Indian irregular corps. In his late Diary in India, Mr. Russell bears testimony to the fearful wounds effected by this weapon on our soldiers. With slight modifications, this Asiatic sabre is the weapon used by the Chasseurs d'Afrique, who have, when called upon, done terrible execution with it upon their foes throughout Algeria. Little teaching is required to make any man of ordinary strength who wields it, a good swordsman, and it is in every respect more easily managed than the cut and thrust sword now used by our cavalry. But to have this weapon as effective as possible, it should be provided with a stout leather, instead of a steel, scabbard: the latter only serving to blunt the edge, which, as in the East, should at all times be kept as sharp as a razor.

But besides being good swordsmen, our volunteer cavalry should be expert rifle shots, able to hit any object half as large as a man's body at a distance of at least three hundred yards. To effect this, good fire-arms and much practice are required. The best—in fact the only—rifle which a mounted soldier should use, is the rifled breech-loading carbine, which should be somewhat

lighter, smaller in the bore, and longer in the barrel, than the arm lately introduced into our English cavalry. This rifle should not be carried, as our dragoons carry their carbines, strapped to the horse, outside the rider's right thigh, but slung round the body with a strap: the muzzle coming behind and above the left shoulder, the butt behind and below the right hip, after the manner of our own Cape Mounted Rifles, and of the Chasseurs d'Afrique. In this fashion the weapon may not only be carried loaded with the greatest safety, but is easy to be got at when wanted, and when thus slung, the right arm is free to use the sword. Volunteer cavalry should recollect that they are chiefly useful as mounted riflemen, and should therefore spare no pains in making themselves perfect marksmen.

Without entering upon any of the numerous controversies respecting the most appropriate colour in which a volunteer should be clothed, it may be well to give some general hints as to what is the best style of dress for a mounted soldier in England. Hitherto our rifle volunteers have been too apt to run into extremes in their dress: some adopting by far too many of the Germanic military fopperies which have long proved a standing nuisance in our regular army; others seeming to think that to be easy and comfortable to work in, their uniforms must be more or less ridiculous to look at. Both of these are great mistakes. A soldier's uniform should be what in campaigning is called "workman-like," but it should at the same time be decidedly military in appearance. For a mounted man there can be no better head-dress than the helmet-shaped cap commonly worn in India, and now to be seen in many London shops. Made of light grey waterproof felt, and with very slight military ornaments (such as the number of the wearer's corps) upon it, it will not only look well, but sit as easy to the head as a hunting-cap. The neck should be free from anything in the shape of stock, and merely protected from the cold by the stand up collar (which must be quite loose) of the tunic. The latter garment may be of such colour as the volunteers of the corps decide upon, but in the writer's opinion, scarlet is best adapted for a British regiment. Above all things the tunic should be loose and easy—large enough to admit of the wearer's being able to retain a waistcoat, or other warm clothing, under his uniform in cold weather. All military dress should, externally, be quite uniform; that is, no one member of a regiment should be allowed to differ in the slightest degree—not so much as in the number of his buttons or the placing of them on his coat—from his fellows; but men cannot all be expected to have the same feelings of hot and cold. Hence it is that the tunic should be perfectly loose, and merely confined at the waist by the sword-belt, which should be of black or brown leather, with pouch-belt to correspond. There is no better riding gear for the nether man, than wide pegtop trousers, booted with leather nearly up to the knee; this obviates

the necessity of wearing Wellington boots under the trousers, than which a greater nuisance does not exist when soldiers are campaigning, or even on guard in times of peace, and have to sleep dressed. The Wellington boot at present worn by our dragoons under their trousers—or “overalls,” as cavalry men call them—causes the feet to swell if slept in, and if taken off, is excessively troublesome to get on again, should the corps be roused out suddenly in the night. A very excellent dress for mounted soldiers, is the ordinary hunting “Napoleon” boot, pulled over trousers made of dark blue corduroy. But there are, as a matter of course, many details of costume which must be left to the members of the corps themselves.

To be soldier-like, all uniforms must be workman-like; that is to say, they must be made, more with a view to their being useful and appropriate in the field, than handsome, or what young ladies call “lovely,” in the ball-room. The great fault of nearly all our English uniforms is, that they are endowed with much more of the latter than of the former quality; hence the reason that on service English officers wear so many strange and “fancy” costumes, to the great astonishment of all who behold them. In the Crimea, almost from the commencement of the campaign, there was hardly a single officer clothed in the regulation dress of the corps or department to which he belonged, insomuch that it was generally impossible to say what regiment, or even what branch of the service, any individual belonged to; whereas the French officers, having a much simpler, easier, cheaper, and more soldier-like uniform, were always dressed as ordered for their rank and corps. Even in our foreign garrison towns some strange sights in this respect are to be witnessed. Not many months ago the writer saw near the main guard at Malta, an officer dressed in scarlet tunic, and sword and sash, having on his head a green wide-awake hat, with a blue veil. On asking who he was, the wearer of this motley costume turned out to be the officer on guard, who preferred an easy to an uneasy head-dress: little thinking what comments on the discipline of the English army he was inducing from three or four French officers stopping for the day in Malta en route to China.

The organisation of volunteer cavalry, although a simple matter, is one of moment. A national mounted force of this kind should be raised and drilled by squadrons, not by regiments. Each squadron should consist of two troops, and each troop of not more than eighty, nor less than sixty, effective men and horses. Each squadron should be commanded by an officer with the rank of major, to whom the captain of each troop should be responsible for the men under his command. The more difference there is between the dresses of different squadrons, the better. To each squadron should be attached, as formerly in all dragoon regiments serving in India, two galloper guns, with an officer and a certain number of men

drilled to work them. In each troop there should be a captain, two lieutenants, and a cornet; with an adjutant, an assistant-surgeon, a veterinary surgeon, and a quartermaster, for each squadron. There is hardly a county—hardly a district—in England, where some retired officers who have seen service with cavalry, either in India, the Crimea, or the Cape, are not to be found, and from such a class the adjutancy of volunteer cavalry should be filled up. All the officers should be selected by those who compose corps in which they are to command, but none should be selected who had not, in one or other branch of the service, seen what campaigning really is, and served somewhere or other in the field before an enemy.

In the event of invasion such a body of men would be found invaluable in aid of regular troops. As guides, as scouts, as escorts, and to hang upon the flank of the enemy at all times, they would be of the greatest possible service. Break off railway communication, and call out a body of men to which every fox-hunter in England would belong, and what enemy could make head through our enclosed fields and lanes and country roads? Train these same fox-hunters to use their rifled carbines and their swords, as Englishmen, when properly taught, can use such weapons—to charge as their countrymen charged at Moodkee, at Aliwall, at Balaklava, and, more lately, in India—and man for man—nay, even at the odds of three to two—no cavalry in the world could withstand them. Rifled field guns are terrible instruments, but would prove useless, or nearly so, when horses and artillerymen were harassed by men who knew the country well, and who were ready behind every hedge. The writer is of opinion that for every hundred volunteer cavalry raised, and properly trained, the same number of our regular dragoons might be spared to fight our battles in other countries.

## VIDOCQ, FRENCH DETECTIVE.

### IN TWO PORTIONS. PORTION THE FIRST.

Vidocq, who was gifted with sound reasoning powers, quick intelligence, clear and ready speech, and who talked better and more to the purpose than three-fourths of the advocates in high repute, was no writer, and never knew the most elementary rules of grammar and orthography. His well-known *Memoirs*, therefore, were edited from his notes, not by himself, but by a couple of literary gentlemen. This dressed-up and unoriginal autobiography has lately been analysed and completed in an interesting volume, “*Vidocq; Vie et Aventures*,” by M. Barthélemy Maurice, who has the double merit of industry in the collection of authentic facts, and spirit in weaving them into a narrative.

François-Eugène Vidocq was born at Arras, on the 23rd of July, 1775, in a house close to that in which Robespierre first saw the light sixteen years before him. His father, who was a baker by trade, intended that his son should

succeed to the business, and employed him at an early age to carry the bread to the customers' houses; of which heavy charge, in consequence of his unusually robust constitution, he was capable at an earlier age than other lads. Like many celebrated robbers, François opened his apprenticeship by stealing from the paternal till. At first, he only abused the confidence with which it was left open to his attacks; when it was kept locked, he stormed it with the help of a false key, which at last compromised him. When there was no cash, he laid hands upon the loaves and the household chattels, and sold them for what he could get, to whomsoever would buy. One day, he pledged the family plate at the Mont-de-Piété for a hundred and fifty francs, by which he earned the honour of his first detention at The Baudets, or The Donkeys—the town prison, where he had ten days of dungeon by way of a fatherly correction. He left so well corrected that he broke open his parent's cash-box, took the whole of its contents, about two thousand francs, and escaped to Ostend, with the intention of embarking for America.

How he was plundered of his plunder, how he joined a company of acrobats and dancing-dogs, how he enlisted, fought, deserted, enlisted again into another regiment, deserted again to the Austrians, got flogged or caned, deserted back again, and got wounded in the leg, were long to tell though it was short to do. For, having received his discharge, in consequence of fresh wounds, he married, at the age of eighteen, a lean and ugly woman much older than himself, but who was the sister of one Chevalier, an aide-de-camp of that monster of the Revolution, Joseph Lebon. Having met with what he deserved from this amiable female, after disgraceful wanderings in Belgium he moved to Lille, where he lived by acting as the accomplice of swindlers. A violent assault committed on an officer procured him three months' imprisonment in the Tour Saint-Pierre; but, as he did not want for money, he secured therein a private chamber called the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, or the Bull's Eye.

There were in this prison, at the same time with himself, two ex-sergeant-majors of his acquaintance, who were awaiting the departure of a gang of galley-slaves, and a husbandman condemned to six years of reclusion, who did nothing but lament his fate, and continually repeat that he would give this and that sum of money to regain his liberty. As his position was really pitiable (he had a wife and seven children, and when the scarcity was at its worst had stolen a few pecks of wheat to keep them from starving), and as the offers which he made were not to be despised, the two sergeant-majors at first undertook to draw up in his favour a petition for a free pardon; but they afterwards thought it an easier and a quicker plan to fabricate an order for his discharge, which the gaoler, conniving at the scheme, received as good and available, and immediately put into execution. This document, soon discovered to be false, was concocted in

Vidocq's chamber, if not with his collaboration. He was found guilty of forgery and the employment of forged papers purporting to be public and authentic writings. Years afterwards, to justify himself against an accusation that he had been often condemned—once to death—he took care to publish in his *Memoirs* the text of the judgment pronounced against him, the 7th Nivose, an V (27th of December, 1796), by the criminal tribunal of the Département du Nord, sitting at Douai, a judgment which condemns him to eight years in irons, and six hours of public exposure. It is a singular position for a man to be in, to be obliged to make use of such a document as a sort of certificate of comparative respectability. Vidocq, it seems, never underwent any other condemnation than this.

This is the proper place to mention, once for all, two extraordinary faculties which Vidocq possessed: the first, was the power of adapting his physiognomy to circumstances; the second, of doing whatever he would with his stomach, either in the way of abstinence or of absorption. A first-rate actor will mould his features to represent those of a youth, or of a man a hundred years old; and this, no doubt, is a wonderful feat; but, after all, it is performed in a theatre, by lamp-light, and at a certain distance from the nearest spectator; whereas it was by broad daylight, in immediate contact with former accomplices, with professional thieves, in the presence of turnkeys, gendarmes, and commissaries of police, that Vidocq assumed whatever stature, gait, physiognomy, age, and accent, best suited his purpose. He was tall, and of athletic build; and yet, when he was more than sixty years of age, his favourite disguise was to dress himself in female attire! The peculiar disposition of his stomach was still more remarkable. We find him, in his moments of distress, going without food two or three whole days; and afterwards, when he kept one of the best tables in Paris, quitting it to go and devour in a filthy den, with every appearance of gluttonous appetite, boiled potatoes, lumps of bacon, and even those shapeless remnants of food left on people's plates in restaurants, which the poor wretches reduced to feed on them style "un arlequin"—a harlequin. We find him drinking, with equal gaiety and in equal quantities, iced champagne and the cheap "vin-bleu," or blue wine, which was consumed outside the barriers of Paris; and swallowing from morning till night, and from night till morning, half-pints and pints of that corrosive poison which is retailed, under the name of *eau-de-vie*, in the taverns and "souri-cières," or mouse-traps, which surround the halles or markets. His other personal appetites were equally under the command of his intellect and his will. Be it remembered that the leading points of this wonderful individual's character may legitimately be the object of public curiosity, not because he lived the life of a convict for several years, but because for twenty years he was the chief of the Police of Surety, a service which he created, and at the head of



which he cleared Paris of more than twenty thousand malefactors of the worst description.

After the turning period of Vidocq's condemnation for forgery, his life was a series of escapes from prison, each more impudent, ingenious, and daring than the other. On one occasion, in the Rue Equermoise, the principal street of Lille, he stumbled on a police-agent, face to face, and pretended to surrender, but got away from his captor by throwing cinder-ashes in his eyes. Another time, the Commissary Jacquard got information that he was going to dine in the Rue Notre-Dame, at a house where meals were served to small parties of people. The commissary proceeded there, accompanied by four attendants, whom he left on the ground floor, and went up-stairs himself to the very room where Vidocq was seated at table with a couple of ladies. The fourth guest, a recruiting sergeant, had not yet arrived. Vidocq recognised the commissary, who, never having seen the object of his search, had not the same advantage; his disguise, moreover, would have thrown out all the written descriptions in the world. Without being disconcerted in the least, Vidocq accosted the intruder, in an easy tone of voice, and requested him to step into a side room, which had a glass door opening into the large dining-room, on pretence that he had something of importance to communicate.

"You are looking out for Vidocq? If you will only wait ten minutes, I will point him out to you. This is his knife and fork and his plate; he cannot be long. When he comes in, I will make signs to you; but, if you are alone, I doubt whether you will be able to take him, because he is armed, and is resolved to defend himself."

"My men are on the staircase; and if he gets away from me, they——"

"Do not leave them there on any account. If Vidocq only catch sight of them, he will suspect there is something in the wind, and your bird will soon be flown."

"But where can I put them?"

"Eh! Mon Dieu, in this little room. But, above all, take care not to make any noise: that would spoil everything. I have quite as much interest as you can have, in getting him out of the way."

The commissary and his agents retired, therefore, into the little room. The door was strong, and was soon double-locked. Their unknown friend, sure of making his escape, shouted to them, "*You* are looking out for Vidocq? Well; it is Vidocq who has caught and caged *you*. Good-by, till next time."

Two other performances in the same style of acting answered his purpose equally well, but he was arrested at last, and brought back to the Tour Saint-Pierre, where, for greater safety, he was put into a dungeon, with criminals condemned to death. His arrival could not have been more opportune; his new companions had long been preparing for a flight, in which he was invited to take part, and which was put in practice the third night afterwards. Eight of

the condemned men passed through a hole perforated in the wall, within three paces of a sentinel, who had not the slightest suspicion of what was going on.

Seven prisoners still remained. According to custom on such occasions, they drew straws to decide who was to follow the first of the seven. The lot fell to Vidocq, who undressed himself in order to slip more easily through the opening, which was very narrow; but, to everybody's disappointment, he stuck fast, unable to move either backwards or forwards. In vain his companions endeavoured to pull him out by main strength; he was caught and nipped as it were in a vice, and his sufferings became so intolerable, that, despairing of any aid from within, he called the sentinel, to beg for help from without. The soldier approached with the utmost precaution. At his shouts, the guard seized their arms, the turnkeys hastened to the spot with lighted torches, and Vidocq was dragged out of the hole in the masonry, leaving strips of skin behind him. Wounded as he was, he was immediately transferred to the prison called the Petit-Hôtel, where he was thrust into a dungeon and loaded with irons, hand and foot.

This severe lesson did not deter him from again attempting to escape. One day he was brought up for examination, together with seventeen other prisoners. Two gendarmes guarded them in the magistrate's ante-chamber, whilst a picket of the line kept watch outside. One of the gendarmes laid down his hat and cloak to go into the magistrate's presence. A bell rang to summon his comrade. In an instant, Vidocq threw the cloak over his shoulders, stuck the cocked-hat on his head, took one of the prisoners by the arm, as if leading him out for a breath of air, knocked at the door, which was speedily opened by a corporal, and next moment was in the street.

As a change, he joined a company of mountebanks who were performing pantomimes at Courtrai and Ghent. He lived very comfortably on the share of the receipts allotted to him. But one evening, just as he was about to make his appearance before the admiring spectators, he was arrested on the information of the clown, who was furious at being outshone by a brighter star. The consequence was a dungeon at Douai, irons hand and foot, and the society of a couple of finished scoundrels. At Toulon, he managed to pass out of the town, through the gates, acting on the bright idea—suggested by a female friend—of joining the followers of a funeral. He employed the freedom so obtained, to enlist in a band of highway robbers, who turned him out, a fortnight afterwards, on discovering, by the mark on his shirt, that he came from the galleys.

After numberless similar reimprisonments and re-escapes, he tried hard to lead a comparatively quiet and regular life, in the Faubourg St. Denis, Paris, where he was not known. He set up as a tailor, entered into the semblance of domestic arrangements (his mother living with him, together with a husbandless lady called Annette),

found his affairs prospering, and saw rising before his eyes the vision of a happy life, when he was recognised, and consequently laid under contribution, by two former comrades from the galleys of Brest, who at first mulcted him to the amount of forty or fifty francs, and afterwards wanted to live entirely at his expense. It requires no very vivid imagination to compose the sequel of the romance; the tyranny of these undesirable acquaintances became at length unbearable. They brought him stolen goods, and compelled him to turn receiver, whether he would or no. He was obliged to burn his carriole, or covered cart, because he had lent it to these very dear friends, who had made use of it for the commission of a murder in the banlieue. A third man, presented by the two Arcadians, insisted on having impressions of the keys of all the drapers with whom Vidocq was in the habit of doing business.

Vidocq was conscious, now that henceforth he must either be the tool and the slave of thieves and murderers, or must be their master and their scourge. In this dilemma, he offered his services to M. Henry, Chief of the Second Division of Police, on the sole condition that he should not be sent back to the galleys, but that he should finish the remaining term of his sentence in any prison they liked to appoint. His first overture was coldly received and not accepted; his name was not even asked; and he was obliged to hide himself disguised as an "Invalid" who had lost his left arm. Unfortunately, he took refuge with a couple of coiners, with whom he ventured to remonstrate on their dangerous and illegal trade. They, fearing some indiscretion on his part, thought it best to forestal him by calling the attention of the authorities to their scrupulous lodger. He was arrested in his shirt on the top of a roof, and brought before M. Henry, who remembered the advances he had lately made, and promised to interest himself in his welfare. Three months afterwards, due inquiry having been made, it was decided to accept the bargain. What Vidocq undertook to do, he did, thoroughly, efficiently, and unflinchingly. He gloried in the name of spy; treachery brought no shame to his cheek: he summed up all with the satanic exclamation, "Evil, be thou my good!" The way in which he set about his task shows the style of his abilities.

It would not do to let the criminal world have the slightest inkling of the understanding that had been come to; and therefore, when the arrangement was concluded, he was transferred as a convict to the prison of La Force. On arriving at his new residence, he took great care, in concert with the police, to spread the report that he was implicated in a most serious affair, for which evidence was then being sought. M. Henry, the person by whom the bargain was made, spoke of his protégé's sagacity in such high terms to the Préfet of Police, that it was agreed to put an end to his captivity at once. But every precaution was taken to avoid any suspicion that the prisoner

had been purposely set at liberty. When he was fetched away from La Force, the strictest formalities were observed; he was handcuffed and put into the prisoners' van; but it was agreed that he should break out of it on the road, which he did. That same evening, the whole staff of the police were hunting after him. The escape made a great noise, especially at La Force, where his friends celebrated it by drinking his health, wishing him a pleasant journey! He continued to be admitted, not only without mistrust, but with open arms and a hearty welcome, into the society and the intimate confidence of the ruffians whom he was henceforward charged, not merely to bring to condemnation, but to arrest by force in case of need. It is evident that his new speciality was not a bed of roses. Perhaps he had even more to fear from the jealousy of his new colleagues than from the resentment of the associates whom he had deserted. If his life were in danger every day, every day also was he the object of false reports and calumnious denunciations. M. Henry, satisfied with his zeal and address, promised to communicate such disparagement to him, in order that he might answer in writing; and, the better to testify his confidence, he entrusted him with the most difficult missions, in which other agents had completely failed.

Vidocq's enemies, and he had plenty of them—first, every criminal, and, secondly, every policeman—asserted that if he effected such numerous arrests, it was only by preparing for them by the odious means of provocation of crime. He denied it stoutly; but he confessed that he was often obliged, not to make criminal propositions, but to pretend to accept those that were made to him. Nor was this all; a heap of reports, some signed, some anonymous, accused him of taking advantage of his position to carry on robbery on a gigantic scale. The Chief of the Second Division replied, "If Vidocq commits such important thefts as you say, you must be very clumsy hands at your business not to have caught him in the fact. Have I ever told you not to watch his movements, exactly as other police agents are watched?"

When these enemies found that personal attacks were a waste of time, they directed their hostilities against the men belonging to his brigade, whom they affected to call "Vidocq's gang," as if they were a gang of robbers, or a gang of murderers. It is certain that nine-tenths of them came from the galleys and the central prisons. This formed part of Vidocq's system, for he was convinced that, in order to make war effectually on the criminal portion of society, you must be acquainted with their language, their manners, and their habits. Naturally enough, the more respectable peace-officers felt both dislike and jealousy of the Brigade of Surety, who usurped their most important functions. According to them, the Brigade was the secret cause of every robbery committed in Paris. Vidocq was in a rage. He tried hard to discover some method of putting the honour of his agents beyond sus-

picion. The speciality of their service prevented their being dressed in uniform; he therefore compelled them to wear gloves. Henceforward, no one could reproach his men with "doing business" in the crowd. The most practised hand, unless completely naked, is powerless to prig.

The agents of the Brigade of Surety were no sinecurists. On ordinary occasions they were on duty eighteen hours out of the twenty-four; but when they were out on "an expedition," it might be three or four days before they got back to their lodgings. As for their chief, it was a problem for them, as for everybody else, to know where and when he slept. At whatever hour they wanted him, they always found him dressed, always ready, always close shaved, like an actor—in order to be able to put on wigs, whiskers, and moustaches, of all ages and all colours. It was nothing uncommon to see him disguised in ten different costumes in the course of one day.

Of Vidocq's address and powers of endurance in tracking out and capturing his human game, the two following anecdotes exhibit a slight sample.

It is the custom in France for persons employed in an official capacity to pay their respects to the head of their department on New Year's-day, often accompanying their compliments with a trifling gift, such as a flower or a fruit. There was a redoubtable robber, named Delvèze the Younger, once a hackney-coachman, who had defied the police to arrest him, for two years and a half. On the 1st of January, 1813, Vidocq went to pay his court to M. Henry, and addressed him thus: "I have the honour to wish you a happy new year, accompanied by the famous Delvèze."

"That is what I call something like a New Year's gift," said M. Henry, when he saw the prisoner. "I should be very glad if each of you gentlemen now present, could offer me the like!"

New Year's gifts are offered in the first place according to the ability of the giver; and, secondly, according to the taste of the person to whom they are offered. Vidocq was delighted to find the arrest of Delvèze so thoroughly appreciated by his superiors, although it increased the hatred and jealousy of the peace-officers and their agents. Consequently, on the 1st of January, 1814, he brought another present of the same nature, but of much greater importance, in the person of Fossard, an escaped galley-slave, already celebrated, but who was destined subsequently to immortalise himself by the medal robbery at the Bibliothèque. Fossard was a man of fifty years of age, of herculean stature, and endowed with long-trying strength and courage. It was known that he had made up his mind to do anything rather than return to the galleys; it was known, moreover, that he was armed at all points; that he even carried pistols concealed in the fine lawn pocket-handkerchief which always dangled in his hand, perfectly determined to blow out the brains of the first man who should attempt to arrest him.

Therefore, ever since his return to Paris (whither he had come without asking leave of the authorities at Brest, where quarters had been assigned to him at the government expense), the police agents were more afraid of him than he was of them.

When, on the 15th of December, M. Henry entrusted Vidocq with the dangerous mission of arresting Fossard, the only information he could give him was this: "Fossard is living in Paris, in some street which leads from the Halle to the Boulevard; it is not known on what story he lodges, but the windows of his apartment are hung with yellow silk and embroidered muslin curtains. In the same house there lives a hump-backed young woman, a dressmaker by trade, who is on friendly terms with Fossard's female companion."

These indications were vague enough. A deformed girl is no rarity in any house in Paris which contains a multitude of families; and there are yellow curtains in at least one house in twenty. Never mind; Vidocq set to work, made up and disguised to represent a gentleman sixty years of age, in easy circumstances, and in sufficient preservation to attract the favourable notice of a crook-backed lady, who had left her minority at several years' distance. After twelve days of fruitless research, he discovered his charmer in the third story of a house in the Rue du Petit-Carreau. Presenting himself as the unfortunate husband of the woman with whom Fossard was living, he learned that the latter person had changed his lodgings, that he styled himself Monsieur Hazard, and that he resided in a smart house at the corner of the streets Duphot and St. Honoré.

Vidocq then disguised himself as a coal-heaver, and did it so well, that his mother and his subordinates conversed with him for sometime without recognising him. In this costume, he ascertained that the pretended M. Hazard never went out without being armed to the teeth, and that his elegant white handkerchief always contained a brace of pistols. He came to the conclusion that he had to deal with a man who could only be arrested in bed, and he set about considering the means of success. It appeared to him that the best thing he could do was to inspire the master of the wine-shop, in whose house Fossard lodged, with fears respecting his property, and even for his life. To this effect, after resuming his ordinary dress and mien, he presented himself to the worthy citizen; begging in solemn tones the favour of a little private conversation, he addressed him to the following purport:

"I am commissioned to warn you, on the part of the police, that you are about to be robbed. The robber who has projected the crime, and who perhaps will execute it himself, lodges in your house. The woman who is with him, sometimes comes and seats herself behind your counter, by the side of your wife. While thus engaged in conversation, she has managed to obtain an impression of the key which opens the door by which the thieves are to enter.

Every precaution has been taken; the spring of the bell on the door, is to be cut with a pair of shears, so that you will have no notice of its opening. Once inside, they will rush up to your chamber; and, if they observe the slightest symptom of your awakening—as you have to do with a consummate villain, I have no occasion to explain the rest.”

“They will cut our throats!” said the terrified wine-seller, immediately calling his wife to communicate to her this agreeable piece of news. “What will this world come to! Would you believe it, my dear? That Madame Hazard, so smooth and saintly, that the curé would give her absolution without hearing her confession, has been trying to work our ruin. This very night, they are coming to murder us.”

“No, no,” interrupted Vidocq; “make your minds easy. It is not to come off to-night; the till won’t be heavy enough. They are waiting till Twelfth Day is over; but, if you are discreet, and will agree to second me, we will set all that to rights.”

The wine-merchant and his wife entreated Monsieur le Chef de la Police de Sûreté to ease them, as soon as possible, of so disagreeable a tenant, and not to leave them in a state of apprehension until Twelfth Night was over. Vidocq at first pretended that that would not suit his plans; then, he affected to yield, solely on account of the lively interest with which these worthy people inspired him. The married pair undertook to watch Fossard’s movements, and to keep up a constant communication with Vidocq, who had established his quarter-general at the neighbouring guard-house, in which a commissaire of gendarmes installed himself in permanence, awaiting the moment of action. At eleven o’clock of the night of the 31st of December, Fossard came home without suspicion, humming a tune as he walked upstairs. Twenty minutes afterwards, the disappearance of the light indicated that he had gone to bed. Vidocq and all his companions were quietly let in by the wine-seller. A fresh consultation was held at once as to the means of seizing Fossard without running too great risks.

Vidocq’s first idea was to do nothing before morning. He was informed that Fossard’s lady companion came down stairs very early to fetch milk. The object was to seize this woman, take possession of the key, and so to enter her friend’s bedroom unannounced; but might it not happen that, contrary to custom, he might come down stairs first? This reflection led to the adoption of another expedient. The mistress of the wine-shop, to whom M. Hazard always behaved with great politeness, had one of her nephews staying with her. He was tolerably intelligent for a child of ten years of age, and as precociously anxious to earn money as any little Norman need be. He was promised a reward if, under the pretext of his aunt’s being

indisposed, he would go and beg Madame Hazard to give him some eau-de-Cologne. The young gentleman was exercised in the piteous tone adapted to the pretended circumstances; and, as soon as he was perfect, the play was played. The other actors took off their shoes, in order to get up-stairs unheard. The lad had nothing on but his shirt; he rang the bell. No answer; he rang again.

“Who is there?”

“’Tis I, Madame Hazard; ’tis Louis. My aunt is suddenly taken very ill, and she begs you to give her a little eau-de-Cologne. She says she is dying. I have brought a light.”

The door opened; but scarcely could the lady show herself before she was dragged away by a couple of powerful gendarmes, who clapped a cloth on her mouth to prevent her from screaming. Vidocq threw himself upon Fossard. Stupified by the suddenness of the event, and already handcuffed and bound in his bed, he was taken prisoner before he had time to make a single movement or to utter a single word. His astonishment was so great, that he was nearly an hour before he recovered his speech. When lights were brought in, and he saw his enemy’s coal-heaver’s dress and blackened face, he was seized with redoubled terror.

Search was made in the dwelling of this brigand, who had acquired a redoubtable reputation. A great quantity of jewellery, diamonds, and a sum of eight or ten thousand francs were found. While this investigation was going on, Fossard, who had recovered his presence of mind, confided to Vidocq that beneath the marble top of the side-table there were still ten notes of a thousand francs each. “Take them,” he said; “we will share them between us; or, rather, you shall keep what you please, for yourself.” Vidocq in fact did take the notes as he was requested. They got into a hackney-coach and drove to M. Henry’s office, where the articles found in Fossard’s apartments were deposited. An inventory was made of them. When they came to the last item, the Commissary who had accompanied the expedition for formality’s sake, observed, “We have now only to close the procès-verbal.” “Wait an instant,” cried Vidocq. “Here are ten thousand francs besides, which the prisoner gave me.” So saying, he displayed the notes—to Fossard’s great indignation. He darted one of those glances whose interpretation is, “This trick I will never forgive you!”

---

The Twelfth Journey of  
**THE UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLER,**  
 A SERIES OF OCCASIONAL JOURNEYS,  
 BY CHARLES DICKENS,  
 Will appear Next Week.